

# Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology

David Thomas



BRILL

VISIT...

LANZAROTE  
*Caliente*.COM

# Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology

# History of Christian-Muslim Relations

*Editorial Board*

David Thomas, University of Birmingham

Tarif Khalidi, American University of Beirut

Gerrit Jan Reinink, University of Groningen

Mark Swanson, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

VOLUME 10

# Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology

*By*

David Thomas



BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON  
2008

*Front cover illustration:* ܕܡܝ is the name of God Yah in Syriac, with the dots indicating both trinity and unicitey. It is used as a kind of basmallah sign in all important East Syrian texts.

Christians and Muslims have been involved in exchanges over matters of faith and morality since the founding of Islam. Attitudes between the faiths today are deeply coloured by the legacy of past encounters, and often preserve centuries-old negative views.

*The History of Christian-Muslim Relations, Texts and Studies* presents the surviving record of past encounters in authoritative, fully introduced text editions and annotated translations, and also monograph and collected studies. It illustrates the development in mutual perceptions as these are contained in surviving Christian and Muslim writings, and makes available the arguments and rhetorical strategies that, for good or for ill, have left their mark on attitudes today. The series casts light on a history marked by intellectual creativity and occasional breakthroughs in communication, although, on the whole beset by misunderstanding and misrepresentation. By making this history better known, the series seeks to contribute to improved recognition between Christians and Muslims in the future.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Thomas, David (David Richard), 1948-

Christian doctrines in Islamic theology / By David Thomas.

p. cm. -- (History of Christian-Muslim relations ; v. 10)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

- ISBN 978-90-04-16935-7 (hardback : alk. paper) 1. Islam--Relations--Christianity.  
2. Christianity and other religions--Islam. 3. Bible--Islamic interpretations.  
4. Christianity--Influence. I. Title. II. Series.

BP172.T46 2008

297.2'93--dc22

2008031328

ISSN: 1570-7350

ISBN: 978 90 04 16935 7

Copyright 2008 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Hotei Publishing,

IDC Publishers, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers and VSP.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill NV provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910, Danvers, MA 01923, USA.

Fees are subject to change.

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

## CONTENTS

|                                                               |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Foreword .....                                                | vii |
| Chapter One. Muslim Theologians and Christian Doctrines ..... | 1   |
| Chapter Two. Al-Nāshī' al-Akbar.....                          | 19  |
| Chapter Three. Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī .....                   | 79  |
| Chapter Four. Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī .....                     | 119 |
| Chapter Five. 'Abd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī .....     | 205 |
| Bibliography .....                                            | 379 |
| References to the Bible and the Qur'ān .....                  | 385 |
| Index .....                                                   | 387 |





## FOREWORD

This book brings together the arguments against Christianity in four Muslim theological treatises from the fourth/tenth century. They are the first systematic treatises that have survived from Muslim authors, and they include works by three of the leading theological experts of the early Islamic era, al-Māturīdī, al-Bāqillānī and ‘Abd al-Jabbār, the other being by al-Nāshī’ al-Akbar. This is sufficient justification for presenting them in fresh editions with translations, and for situating them in their intellectual contexts. But they also implicitly give a great deal of information about relations between Muslims and Christians in this period, about Christian efforts to defend and explain themselves in Muslim milieus, and above all about Muslim attitudes towards Christianity at this time. So they are valuable social as well as theological records that deserve to be widely known and studied.

The effort to understand much of what is contained in the technical language of these works is considerable, and the task of translating and interpreting their details is often hard, and occasionally impossible. Repeated readings can usually yield meaning, but in a few places this remains locked away from even the keenest inquiry. Nevertheless, the works reveal the liveliest minds engaged in defence of firmly-held beliefs, attest to impressive intellects staunchly maintaining received truth, and give hints of links with earlier works in the same genre. So there are more than ample compensations for the effort made to follow their arguments.

A succession of people have helped in the writing of this book, and it is a pleasure to thank them, the Coptic monk who devoted a morning to securing access to the manuscript of al-Nāshī’, the anonymous lady who readily typed the Arabic, Rima Barsoum who checked it, Gordon Hughes who assisted with German, and John Davies who smoothed English style. They can, of course, take no responsibility for any mistakes that have undoubtedly escaped detection. That remains mine alone.

David Thomas



## CHAPTER ONE

### MUSLIM THEOLOGIAN AND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

By the beginning of the fourth/tenth century Islamic theology had achieved a level of maturity which made it an admirably versatile instrument for interpreting the ways in which God and the world existed and related to one another. Muslim theologians active at this time brought together the disparate questions and issues that had occupied attention for more than a century into a unity of thought, and produced the first works that can be called treatises of Islamic theology. Ambitious in design and often prodigious in size, in their fully developed form these included treatments of everything from the problem of knowledge and the contingent nature of the world to matters of individual morality and the legitimate leadership of the Islamic state. Integral to their treatment of the array of religious questions was the examination and refutation of other religions. The ways in which the various authors approached the claims they identified from non-Muslim believers, and Christians in particular, tell a great deal about the authors' regard for them at this time, and even more about their regard for their own intellectual discipline and the faith of which it was a subtle articulation.

#### *Christians in Islamic Society*

By the turn of the fourth/tenth century Christians living under Islamic rule had more or less come to terms with the situation in which they found themselves. They might look back on times when there had been no serious rivals to their claim to be the recipients of God's supreme and final disclosure to his creatures. But in the two and a half centuries since Muslim armies had begun to wrest for themselves tracts of Byzantine and Sasanian territory and established their own rule, Christians had come to acknowledge the potency of Islam as a faith as well as a polity, and the need to come to terms with it socially and intellectually.

Socially, Christians often benefited from Muslim rule because they had knowledge and skills that were valued in society. The sheer ability to run a bureaucracy, in which Byzantine local officials were expert, meant that Muslim imperial chanceries habitually included Christian secretaries. From time to time crack-downs on non-Muslims in important positions rendered them jobless—it is not impossible that John of Damascus’s reason for withdrawing from his high office to a monastery was the arabization measures of Umayyad caliphs at the beginning of the second/eighth century<sup>1</sup>—but in general they were able to keep their positions as long as they maintained ambition in check. The medical knowledge they guarded as their own, their facility in Greek and Syriac, and the technical acquisitions they preserved from former times all guaranteed for them prized positions in a society that naturally expected the amenities of life and ambitiously sought the learning of the Greek world.

Christian professionals were thus respected and courted for the expertise they could give. But whether this meant they were greeted and welcomed is not at all clear. The fact that in a revealing diatribe against Christian excesses, the third/ninth century essayist and scholar Abū ‘Uthmān al-Jāhīz comments on them hiding the signs of their status which by law they were required to show in their dress, engaging in the sporting pastimes of Muslims, and adopting Muslim names,<sup>2</sup> is perhaps indicative of some unease with their lot and a desire to mask the differences that restrained them from full participation in society. But they were legally *dhimmīs*, ‘protected people’, and governed by regulations that might be enforced at any time to make them adhere to their separate status. The caliph al-Mutawakkil had actually invoked these regulations in 235/849–850 and 239/853–854, compelling Christians to display the yellow waist bands that denoted their non-Muslim loyalties and to put up signs of devils on their doorposts.<sup>3</sup> The fact that he soon withdrew these measures and that other caliphs rarely invoked them

---

<sup>1</sup> S. Griffith, ‘“Melkites”, “Jacobites” and the Christological Controversies in Arabic in Third/Ninth Century Syria’, in D. Thomas, ed., *Syrian Christians under Islam, the first thousand years*, Leiden, 2001, (pp. 9–55) p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Jāhīz, *Fi al-radd ‘alā al-Naṣārā*, ed. J. Finkel in *Thalāth rasā’il li-Abī ‘Uthmān al-Jāhīz*, Cairo, 1926, pp. 17–18.

<sup>3</sup> Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje *et al.*, Leiden, 1879–1901, pp. 1389–1390, 1419; trans. J. Kraemer, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. XXXIV, ‘Incipient Decline’, Albany NY, 1989, pp. 89–90, 128–129.

will have come as scant comfort to people who saw the threat above them and must have feared it could fall at any time.

So while the true position of Christians in the urban society of third/ninth century Islam is beyond easy or absolute definition, it may well have been one of uneasy partnership with Muslims who in principle protected them and who eagerly sought their expertise, but not one of identification or participation in a society where they might be made to feel they properly belonged.

The anxiety of Christians and other non-Muslims will not have been allayed by the developments they witnessed in the society around them, as over time their own non-Muslim status became an accepted fact, the regulations that governed them as *dhimmīs* were elaborated into detailed codes standing ready to be implemented at any moment, and they saw themselves borne along by Arabic language, Islamic mores, and the intangible though irresistible characteristics of Muslim culture towards an identity that threatened to swamp their own. Conversions may well have exacerbated the sense of something lost, but above all else will have been the awareness of the need to explain their faith and defend it to their Muslim neighbours in terms that could be understood and might hopefully be accepted.

Intellectually, there are signs that at first Christians refused to take Islam seriously. John of Damascus' dismissal in the mid second/eighth century of Muḥammad as a fraud and the Qur'ān as an ignorant imitation of the Bible<sup>4</sup> gave way in the early third/ninth century to attempts by Arabic-speaking Christians to articulate their doctrines in terms of the distinctive *kalām* logic that Muslim intellectuals were currently employing. But they never entirely succeeded, and there are indications that they actually failed to understand fully what they were about. For example, the Nestorian 'Ammār al-Baṣṭī's recasting of the Trinity as the divine essence endowed with two supreme attributes immediately raised questions among Muslims that remained familiar points of dispute for centuries (as is witnessed by arguments in the texts presented here), showing that 'Ammār could not successfully harness the concepts he employed to present his views.

---

<sup>4</sup> D.J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam, the "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"*, Leiden, 1972, pp. 132–133.

‘Ammār was involved in a high-risk strategy.<sup>5</sup> As a contemporary of some of the greatest Mu‘tazilī masters of Baṣra,<sup>6</sup> he evidently knew the debates between them and their opponents about the characterisation of God. The Mu‘tazilīs, as insistent defenders of the absolute oneness of God, maintained that the essence of God was undifferentiated, and therefore that the qualities listed in the Qur’ān and deducible by reason, such as God’s knowledge, power and life, could not derive from any really existent attributes that might be identified in addition to God’s essence itself. Therefore, for them to say, for example, that God is knowing did not mean that he possesses an entitative attribute of knowledge, since this attribute would have to be eternal and formally distinguishable from God’s essence, rendering his unity only relative. But their Muslim opponents argued that unless God’s attributes are real, and derived from entities within the being of God, he cannot be endowed with them in any meaningful way. They used the formula, ‘The attributes are neither God nor other than God’ in order to safeguard this unity, but it is clear that their main concern was to preserve the proper means of knowing what God is like rather than to insist upon his simple, undifferentiated unity.

‘Ammār the Nestorian clearly knew about this debate and sought to make use of it. He argued that the defenders of God’s absolute unity were illogical because when they denied he had an attribute of life they implied he was lifeless, and when they denied he had an attribute of knowledge they implied he was ignorant. Thus God must possess real attributes. And then he argued that among the attributes that can rationally be ascribed to him, those of life and knowledge had priority as constitutive parts of his being and as the origins of all his other attributes. It followed that God and his two prime attributes of Life and Knowledge were what Christians refer to as the Trinity.

This is a neat proof, expressed entirely in terms that a Muslim theologian would appreciate, with the added elegance of identifying the Holy Spirit as God the Lifegiver and the Son as God the Word. But Muslim religious thinkers showed they were not convinced from a

---

<sup>5</sup> S. Griffith, ‘The Concept of *al-Uqnūm* in ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s Apology for the Doctrine of the Trinity’, in *Actes du premier congrès international d’études arabes chrétiennes* (Goslar, Septembre 1980), ed. S.K. Samir, Rome, 1982, pp. 169–191; D. Thomas, ‘The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Early ‘Abbasid Era’, in L. Ridgeon, ed., *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity*, London, 2001, pp. 78–98.

<sup>6</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ed. M. Riḍā-Tajaddud, Tehran, 1971, p. 204.

fairly early stage. An obvious objection was to the prioritising of two attributes over others, such as power, speech or hearing. It is arbitrary to single these out, because in Muslim terms God must equally be endowed with the others as with these two. But a more serious objection, indicative of the Christian failure to grasp the implications of what they were becoming involved in, concerned the function of these attributes. For in Muslim understanding an attribute confers a quality upon its subject: thus knowledge makes someone knowing. But it does not confer a quality upon itself. And so, in 'Ammār's model the attribute of Life might make the Father and Son living but not itself, meaning that the Person of the Holy Spirit could not be alive. This fundamentally undermines the model and the doctrine. The argument was evidently employed in the course of the third/ninth century soon after 'Ammār wrote (maybe by the Mu'tazilī master Abū al-Hudhayl, who certainly argued against him),<sup>7</sup> and in the fourth/tenth century it became a staple of polemic.<sup>8</sup>

'Ammār al-Baṣrī's coining of these Muslim theological techniques in the early third/ninth century shows at the least that Christians were beginning to acknowledge the seriousness of Islamic theology as an intellectual undertaking and thought they could use it for their own purposes. But it also shows that they knew it was necessary to use it, arguably in order to demonstrate to Muslims that their doctrines were sound in intellectual terms, and also to defend themselves against arguments intended to expose the incoherence of their beliefs.

### *Muslim Religious Thinking and Non-Muslim Religions*

This one example indicates the growing power of Muslim theological thought in the third/ninth century, and its cogency as a force among non-Muslims as well as Muslims. Certainly, Muslim theological thinkers appeared fully confident in the proficiency of their logical techniques and in the teachings of their faith to present a complete portrayal of the nature of reality and to defend that against alternative versions in the form of other faiths. The story of how this competence and confidence developed in the early centuries is not as clear as one would like, but

---

<sup>7</sup> See n. 6 above.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. the arguments on pp. 254–255 below.

from what can be gleaned it involved refutations of Christianity and other faiths almost as much as the presentation of positive doctrines.<sup>9</sup>

By the beginning of the third/ninth century Islamic theological thinking had developed into a distinctive discipline with its own issues and problems, and the specialists to engage with them. Chief among these specialists were the emerging groups of rationalist thinkers calling themselves Mu'tazila and centred on Baṣra and Baghdad. And chief among the issues with which they were engaged were the being of God, expressed in terms of the descriptive attributes used of him, the nature of contingent reality, understood by most in terms of division into atoms of matter and accidents that conferred qualities upon these, and the issue of how humans could be morally responsible while God was all-powerful, expressed in terms of autonomy at the moment of performing an action. Nearly all the leading thinkers who were active at this time are known to have held views on these and other matters, and usually to have written works on them. Their works were often attacks on opposing suggestions as well as expositions of keenly argued positions.

Among works on the major issues of Muslim theological debate about the nature of God and the world, and the relationship between the two, and attacks on other individuals or groups, are usually to be found works on or against non-Muslim religions, in particular Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism or some other form of dualism. Most theologians are credited with such works, and nearly all the leading specialists of the first 'Abbasid century wrote one or more attacks on the followers of these faiths. It would appear that such works were as much a part of theological discourse as questions arising within Islamic thinking.

But maybe it is artificial to make a distinction between arguments directed against views held by Muslim opponents and non-Muslims. The Qur'ān, after all, depicts, Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians as recipients of revelations that were in line with its own message, so it would naturally follow that Muslims should look on them as part of the same general dispensation as they were themselves. So the divergences they noted in the teachings of Christians and others were from the norms they themselves sought to understand and articulate in their

---

<sup>9</sup> For an earlier formulation of the argument in this and the following two sections, cf. D. Thomas, 'Dialogue with other Faiths as an Aspect of Islamic Theology', in T.L. Hettema and A. van der Kooij, eds, *Religious Polemics in Context*, Assen, The Netherlands, 2004, pp. 93–109.



own thinking. And just as they wrote against opponents who in principle based themselves upon the Qur'ān and the tradition that stemmed from that, they would as readily write against those who based themselves on an equivalent though earlier revelation in order to bring to their attention the errors of their articulations and to draw them into agreement with the formulations which they themselves promoted as the true expression of Qur'ān-based teachings.

The practical working out of this can be seen in two works from the early and mid third/ninth century.<sup>10</sup> In one, the Zaydī Imām al-Qāsim Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Rassī shows how the doctrine of the Trinity violates the norms of reason that are embedded in Islamic teachings about God, and how the belief that Christ was divine violates both elementary reason and the witness of Christian scripture itself. And in the other, the independent-minded monotheist Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq demonstrates at length how the two doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, as they are presented by the Nestorians, Jacobites and Melkites, cannot compel acceptance because they are logically inept. Both Muslims share the apparent attitude that Christians have deviated from the truth, which is that God is totally one and totally other, and so have sunk into doctrinal incoherence and inconsistency. But they could be educated out of their errors, and presumably made to see where they were wrong and where the path of truth lay.

What is striking about these two refutations of Christianity—and it seems from the more plentiful surviving works from the next century that they followed a convention in this—is that they do not actually focus on Christianity as a set of beliefs and practices, but on the two doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation or Uniting of the divine and human natures in Christ. It is these that interest the authors, and they have detached them from the related doctrines of the atonement, for example, for examination alone.

This is a distinguishing feature of nearly all the known works written in early Islamic times against Christianity. It might be explained by the nature of the arguments that were current among Christians at the time of the coming of Islam and through ensuing centuries, when the character of Christ as both human and divine, and the mode in which his two natures subsisted within him, caused fierce splits into

---

<sup>10</sup> D. Thomas, 'Christian Theologians and New Questions', in E. Grypeou, M. Swanson and D. Thomas, eds, *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with early Islam*, Leiden, 2006, pp. 257–276.

rival denominations and sects. Outsiders might easily assume that this issue was the main distinguishing feature of Christianity, and would thus focus on this and ignore the beliefs it articulated about the being of God uniting with the human in order to bring about the salvation of the world.

There may be truth in this surmise, but a fuller and more fitting explanation is given by looking at Muslim rather than Christian preoccupations. The great doctrine of *tawhīd*, the insistent emphasis upon the oneness of God, was being developed in the early centuries into a description that made God both radically one in his being (so dense a singularity for the Muʿtazila that they would not admit internal differentiation by describing him as living by an eternal attribute of life or knowing by an eternal attribute of knowledge since these attributes must be formally distinct from his essence), and also entirely distinct from his creation, so that he shared nothing with what he had made and could eventually be discerned only by what he was not. For thinkers who were keenly expounding doctrines such as this, of the radical oneness and utter distinctiveness of God, the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation would appear as anathema. In turning their attention to them, they would have been motivated as strongly by a desire to defend their own doctrines by showing the unsustainability of alternatives as by a duty to show to followers of earlier monotheistic revelations how, and sometimes why, they had gone wrong.

It may well be that among the early scholars who wrote works against Christian doctrines there was an attitude that these were the outcome of wrong-headed misinterpretations of scripture, either because the original scripture was contaminated, or because extraneous concepts and methods had been introduced into Christian thinking, or a combination of these. Such explanations certainly appear in works from later times, and there are hints that some of them, at least, were known at an early date. It would be altogether likely that if a scholar was pressed about Christians he might well acknowledge they were holders of an earlier revelation that in origins agreed with his own, and were recipients of a true dispensation given by God. However he articulated his thoughts, he would almost certainly regard these 'People of the Book' as related to himself in faith, but gone wrong. And so he might judge his own activity in arguing against them as educational in some degree, intended to show them as clearly as possible and according to norms they must acknowledge that the ideas about faith which they held were incoherent, irrational and generally

untenable. Certainly, a reading of such as surviving work as Abū 'Īsā's *Radd* supports such an interpretation.

But this educative attitude towards the beliefs of fellow monotheists is so close to a sense of being right oneself that it is hard to distinguish it from its allied attitude of defending Islam and of showing that it is the only reliable means of discerning the true being of God and the world. When al-Qāsim Ibn Ibrāhīm demonstrates in the opening stages of his *Radd* that Islam enshrines the rationally deducible principles of monotheism,<sup>11</sup> he appears to be doing just this.

Thus one finds that by the time works such as those presented here appear, Christian doctrine had been built into a larger structure of argumentation in which whatever educational purpose there had been in refuting it had more or less completely given way to the apologetic purpose of showing how it instanced the consequences of abandoning the straight path of monotheistic purity and espousing hybrid forms of belief. The practice of refuting Christian doctrines had no greater purpose than to complement the exposition of positive Islamic doctrine and to highlight its soundness and perfection by graphically showing how alternatives were ragged and inconsistent.

### *The Integration of Islamic Religious Thought*

The beginning of the process by which the disparate subjects treated within Islamic theological thinking were gradually brought into integrated systems is no longer visible. But one sees what may be early evidence of systematisation in what appear to have been mainly descriptive works on non-Islamic religions written by authors active in the early third/ninth century. One of these, from Abū 'Īsā al Warrāq, may well have been an account of rival forms of belief known in the Islamic world, in which differing claims were set together for the sake of comparison.<sup>12</sup> And from what can be recovered of the *Kitāb al-tawhīd* of the Mu'tazilī-Murjī'ī Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Shabīb, a student of Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām and therefore a contemporary of Abū 'Īsā in the early third/ninth century, it would appear that this work combined discussions of differing Muslim and non-Muslim teachings about the

<sup>11</sup> Thomas, 'Christian Theologians', pp. 260–263.

<sup>12</sup> D. Thomas, 'Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq and the History of Religions', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 41, 1996, pp. 275–290. Cf. pp. 21–22 below.

being and action of God with the author's own views on current issues of debate concerning this topic.<sup>13</sup> All these works are lost, and so ideas about their scopes and structures can only be speculative. But the traces of them that remain in quotations and references in later authors do suggest that they possessed at least a degree of integration, and more importantly brought teachings and opinions from different religious backgrounds into relation with one another and thus into critical tension.

One of the first works of this kind about which a description has come down is the major compendium of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 324/936), an elder contemporary of al-Māturīdī and like him the eponym of one of the major schools of Sunnī theological thought. It must have been among this important scholar's main works because it is placed first in the list that was compiled by his later follower Abū al-Qāsim Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/1176). The latter calls it simply *al-Fuṣūl* (though this must be only one element of what was originally a longer title), and he says that it contained refutations of non-Muslims, including natural philosophers, materialists and fatalists, followed by 'Brahmins', Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians, 'a vindication of reasoning and rational argument and a refutation of those who denied that', and also a refutation of the Muslim heretic Ibn al-Rāwandī's assertions about the eternity of the world.<sup>14</sup> It was a work in twelve chapters (*abwāb*), and so this description must cover only a selection of its contents, though it tells enough to show that the *Fuṣūl* combined refutations of those within the Muslim fold and those outside with some form of epistemological discussion. Whether or not it contained these elements in a systematic progression, somewhat like the works of al-Bāqillānī and 'Abd al-Jabbār that succeeded it in the fourth/tenth century, it seems certainly to have brought together arguments for and against a range of topics into one connected discussion.

One is tempted to imagine that in addition to the contents listed by Ibn 'Asākir, it also contained expositions of Islamic teachings as al-Ash'arī understood them. And indeed there is justification for this when one examines the contents of the *Luma' fī al-radd 'alā ahl al-zaygh wa-al-bida'* (*Highlights of the Refutation of the Deviators and Innovators*),

<sup>13</sup> J. Pessagno, 'The Reconstruction of the Thought of Muḥammad ibn Shabīb', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104, 1984, pp. 445–453.

<sup>14</sup> Trans. R. McCarthy, *The Theology of al-Ash'arī*, Beirut, 1953, pp. 211–212.

one of the few works by al-Ash'arī that survives, and his only systematic work that can be examined at first hand.

The *Luma'* contains ten brief chapters on: God's existence and attributes, the Qur'ān (as the word of God) and the will of God, God's will encompassing all that occurs, the beatific vision, God's determining of events, human capability, the imputation of justice and injustice to God, faith, the fate of believers, and the leadership of the community.<sup>15</sup> These clearly address matters that were debated by al-Ash'arī and his contemporaries, as well as by their predecessors in the third/ninth century. And while in themselves they represent technical points of difference within current Muslim theology, they also show that these points were perceived as part of a single progression, in which discussion about the being of God in himself led into the relationship between him and the world, individual faith and responsibility, and finally the rule of the Muslim community.

Al-Ash'arī says at the beginning of the *Luma'* that he is writing it as a brief or abridged work (*kitāb mukhtaṣar*) 'which will contain a summary exposition of the arguments which elucidate what is true and refute what is vain and empty assertion'.<sup>16</sup> And it must surely be an abridgement of a larger work in which the points it contains were treated more fully and linked more explicitly together, and the exposition of the author's own theological views were combined with refutation of others. A possible contender may well have been the work that comes immediately before the *Luma'* in Ibn 'Asākir's list, the *K. ʾIdāh al-burhān fī al-radd ʾalā ahl al-zaygh wa-al-tuḡhyān* (*The Elucidation of the Proof in Refutation of the Deviators and Unbelievers*), which has a similar title. This work, according to the list, which it should be said Ibn 'Asākir compiled on the basis of a list given in one of al-Ash'arī's own works, was an introduction to a longer work, the *K. al-mūjiz* (*The Epitome*), which was like the *Fuṣūl* in comprising twelve chapters (*abwāb*) and containing 'various opinions of adversaries, both Muslim and non-Muslim', and may well have been a condensed version of it.

Brief notes attached to a list of works that have vanished, even by their own author, must warn against drawing inferences too definitely. But if the *Fuṣūl* and *Luma'* are connected by the latter being an abbreviation at third remove of the contents and structure of the former, then there is some likelihood that the *Fuṣūl* was a systematic work of

<sup>15</sup> See the edition and translation in McCarthy, *Theology of al-Ash'arī*.

<sup>16</sup> McCarthy, *Theology of al-Ash'arī*, p. 5.

some kind that combined the presentation of positive doctrine with the refutation of Muslim and non-Muslim opponents, including Christians. And even if the two are not connected in any linear descent, the *Luma'* must surely contain in abbreviated form the kind of arguments that its author's major work, the *Fuṣūl*, will have contained in more elaborate and nuanced versions.

What this amounts to is that in the case of al-Ash'arī, writing sometime in the early fourth/tenth century, we have possibly one of the earliest systematic theological compendiums, in which Christianity, together with doctrines from other faiths, was treated as part of Muslim theological discourse. The process that can be seen in the extant works from this time and later, as presented below, seems to have been a normal part of theological activity by the time the first of them, al-Māturīdī's *K. al-tawḥīd*, was written.

It is difficult to say when this form of synthesised theological compendium first appeared, but between the mid third/ninth century and the beginning of the fourth/tenth century a change had clearly occurred, from works in which Christianity was treated in isolation to these large scale works in which it was treated together with other faiths. This is not to say that works written expressly about and against Christianity were no longer written—both al-Ash'arī at the beginning of the century<sup>17</sup> and 'Abd al-Jabbār towards the end<sup>18</sup> are credited with such works—but it does indicate a significant change in attitude. For the fact that Christian doctrines were now refuted in the context of discussions about Muslim doctrines and the refutations of Muslim and other opponents, and that these doctrines were always the ones that challenged the Muslim doctrine of divine unity, suggests that their main interest for Muslims was to support the validity of their own interpretations of *tawḥīd* by providing unviable counter examples. The inconsistencies and lack of logic that could easily be uncovered within them gave clear evidence that only the Islamic formulation was tenable, and their errors provided an unmistakable warning against lowering the guard upon rigorous expositions of Islamic belief.

<sup>17</sup> See nos. 84 and 86 in the list in McCarthy, *Theology of al-Ash'arī*, p. 227.

<sup>18</sup> See G.S. Reynolds, *A Muslim Theologian in the Sectarian Milieu*, 'Abd al-Jabbār and the *Critique of Christian Origins*, Leiden, 2004, p. 60, for a discussion of the historicity of this work.

*The Function of Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theological Works*

The subsidiary function given to Christian doctrines in these works that are first clearly traceable to the beginning of the fourth/tenth century serves also to indicate that the perceived threat from Christian, as well as other non-Islamic claims, to portray divinity accurately had receded by comparison with the period fifty to a hundred years earlier when writers such as Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq attached high importance to discovering as accurately as possible what Christians believed in order to demonstrate they were wrong. In the works presented here, Christianity has been simplified into a set of formulaic teachings, information about them has often been derived from identifiable Muslim literary sources rather than from Christians themselves, and views from Christian interlocutors, while not entirely absent, are few. Maybe what is to be seen here is evidence both of the withdrawal of Christian theologians over time from the active debates that constantly goaded Muslims into acute and inventive ripostes from earlier in the 'Abbasid era, and also of a maturing of Muslim theological thinking into a form where its relationship with rival religious claims was now clear and, in the minds of its practitioners, its completeness and perfection were accomplished.

The works presented here certainly bear out such an observation. If, for example, one looks at the long and curious list of teachings about Christ and Christian religious practices given by al-Nāshī' al-Akbar,<sup>19</sup> one is made to wonder whether this was anything more to him than an antiquarian curiosity. Certainly, he makes no further use of it elsewhere in his refutation, so it stands as a witness to Christian errancies and as an object of pity and ridicule. There is also the brief account of Christian doctrines given by Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī, from the same time as al-Nāshī'.<sup>20</sup> This stands in stark comparison with the detailed equivalents of al-Qāsim Ibn Ibrāhīm and Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq from a few decades earlier,<sup>21</sup> where careful attempts are made to distinguish the differences between the main Christian denominations, and there is evidence of concentrated research into the origins of their doctrinal formulations.

<sup>19</sup> Below pp. 42–59.

<sup>20</sup> Below pp. 226–227.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Qāsim Ibn Ibrāhīm, *Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, ed. I. di Matteo, 'Confutazione contro i Cristiani dello zaydita al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm', *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 9, 1921–1922, pp. 314.8–318.13; Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq, *Radd 'alā al-thalāth firaq min al-Naṣārā*, ed. D. Thomas, *Anti-Christian Polemic in Early Islam, Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq's 'Against the Trinity'*, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 66–77.

Abū ‘Alī’s account, on the other hand, is condensed into brief propositions which stand in isolation, disconnected from their historical roots and the denomination that upholds them, as abstract hypotheses to be tested according to *kalām* method, with the clear expectation they will not survive the process. Then, thirdly, there is al-Māturīdī’s attack on the belief that Christ is divine, a concentrated succession of over-abbreviated points that brings together an array of earlier Muslim arguments.<sup>22</sup> There is nothing here about any other element of Christian belief, because the author’s purpose at this point is to show that Christ was human, in accordance with Muslim beliefs, as part of his wider intention in this section of his treatise to show that God has communicated with his creation by means of the prophetic messengers referred to in the Qur’ān.

These three examples indicate that the authors of these works only thought of Christian doctrines and beliefs as material that could be used to drive home their points about the curious errors and logical fallacies among these other believers. They did not present a serious alternative to Muslim belief, having been scrutinised and exposed for the threadbare creations they were. By the time that al-Bāqillānī and ‘Abd al-Jabbār came to incorporate arguments against the Trinity and Incarnation into their systematic treatises, any possible threat had retreated completely and these doctrines served only to emphasise the strength and truth of Muslim doctrines.

### *Christians and Kalām Methods*

There is evidence in the works presented here that Christians continued to be actively engaged in the defence of their beliefs and in discussion with Muslim counterparts. But this evidence too, at least as it stands, is indicative of the ascendancy of Muslim theology, and Christians having to work hard to find ways of showing their doctrines could be proved coherent in the terms that were used within it.

At the beginning of the fourth/century, al-Nāshī’ al-Akbar refers obliquely to Christians comparing the divine hypostases in the Trinitarian Godhead with the accidents that endow qualities upon material substances.<sup>23</sup> They make the point that whereas accidents can be

<sup>22</sup> Below pp. 96–117.

<sup>23</sup> Below pp. 66–69, §33 and n. 60.



of blackness or whiteness they are nevertheless identical as accidents, and in the same way the hypostases are identical even though they are differentiated as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The ease with which al-Nāshī' goes on to expose its weaknesses and its inappropriateness for the purpose to which the Christians have put it suggests that while its Christian inventors had enough acquaintance with the methods of *kalām* thinking to recognise the superficial potential of this element as a means of explaining and justifying the character of the hypostases, they were not sufficiently versed in the discipline to perceive the implications of what they were doing. They were hardly Christian *mutakallimūn*, able to employ current theological idioms for their own purposes, but rather give the impression of apologists seizing upon points that might bolster their position.

Some years later, al-Bāqillānī refers to an individual Christian (*fā-in qāla minhum qā'il*) who attempts to compare his own doctrine of the Trinity with the Muslim's doctrine of the divine attributes.<sup>24</sup> This Christian says that just as in al-Bāqillānī's Ash'arī interpretation the attributes are neither identical with God himself nor different from him, bringing into play the view shared by al-Bāqillānī and those who agreed with him that the attributes are formally distinct entities though not ontologically discrete from the essence of God, so in his own Christian interpretation the hypostases are identifiable from the substance of God although not different from it. Since al-Bāqillānī's answer to this comparison is forced and unconvincing,<sup>25</sup> and this intervention does little to further his argument, there is a good chance that this Christian voice is real. It knows enough about al-Bāqillānī's own particular version of the doctrine of the divine attributes to point to this comparison (it could not do this with the Mu'tazilī doctrine of the attributes), and since the comparison involves the particular interpretation of the divine attributes that al-Ash'arī and his followers developed in the fourth/tenth century, following his change of heart from Mu'tazilism, then it is likely to come from an actual contemporary of al-Bāqillānī.

So here is an attempt to take the argument back to the Muslim polemicist, not unlike 'Ammār al-Baṣrī a century before, in a show of well-informed, inventive and vigorous argumentation. But, at least in the form in which it is preserved, it is defensive, striving to find a way to explain the Trinity that a Muslim theologian might accept. There is

<sup>24</sup> Below pp. 164–167, § 17.

<sup>25</sup> Below pp. 164–167, § 17, and n. 37.

no sign that it forms part of a wider articulation of the doctrine from a Christian who is imbued in Muslim theological method and confidently expressing his beliefs in an idiom which he shares with co-religionists and Muslim *mutakallimūn*. Rather it is a stab at an idea that might make an explanation and maybe win agreement.

Later in the century, ‘Abd al-Jabbār mentions other anonymous voices who try to get him to accept their interpretation of the Incarnation by comparing it with Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī’s understanding of what the Qur’ān is. According to this Mu‘tazilī master, as they portray him, the Qur’ān can exist on a writing surface or someone’s tongue as well as on the preserved tablet in the presence of God.<sup>26</sup> They coin this analogy as part of their argument that the Son united with Jesus by inhering within him although the Godhead remained unchanged, which in ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s logic is impossible, and he is compelled to explain at some length that even though they may be right, in Abū ‘Alī’s terms the word would still be in a particular physical location, and the same would apply to God with the consequence that God would be subject to physical limitations.

Again, there is no reason to doubt the reality of these Christians. And they show considerable tactical acumen in bringing in a revered figure of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s school (his own teacher’s teacher’s teacher and father), as well as insight in drawing the parallel they do. In this they compare with al-Bāqillānī’s antagonists, and show similar telling awareness of teachings that their Muslim interlocutor would respect and have to take seriously. But they also show similar lack of the deeper awareness that might anticipate the Muslim scholar’s objection and the ability to circumvent it. They offer a polemical jibe, rather than what seems to be a considered view, and it withers under detailed interrogation.

Of course, it would be astonishing if either al-Bāqillānī or ‘Abd al-Jabbār quoted Christian scholars whose arguments compelled acceptance. Impartial quoting of others’ views would not serve their purpose, though they would not be helped either by distorting what their opponents said or misrepresenting them so that informed readers saw they were creating straw men to destroy. Nevertheless, the absence of any sustained Christian objections or alternative formulations of faith that might occasion more fully engaged arguments from the Muslim theolo-

---

<sup>26</sup> Below pp. 322–323, §54.

gians points to the fact that these were not to be found, and that the isolated attempts recorded by the two theologians are not part of a larger Christian theology expressed in terms of the *kalām* that Muslims had developed over two centuries up to this point and that Arabic-speaking Christians had come to know.

These are only scraps of evidence, and the absence of anything more should warn sternly against over-categorisation. It is possible that there was at this time a Christian exposition of the Trinity, Incarnation and other doctrines that built upon such foundations as the apologetic works of the Nestorian 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, the Jacobite Ḥabīb ibn Khidma Abū Rā'īṭa and others at the start of the third/ninth century. But there is no record of this, and no known Christians who could have produced it. One must therefore ask whether the fact that the only Christian theologian's name known to any of these four Muslims is that of the early third/ninth century Theodore Abū Qurra, whom 'Abd al-Jabbār refers to incompletely as 'Qurra the Melkite',<sup>27</sup> is coincidence, or whether there were no Christians who could command attention from self-confident Muslims as they developed their systematic theologies and saw how convincing their analyses of reality were.<sup>28</sup> Maybe the reality is that just as Muslims saw Christian doctrines as useful only as instances of erroneous theologising, so Christians distanced themselves from involvement in this particular Muslim theological activity and followed interests elsewhere.

The net result is that increasingly through the fourth/tenth century there appears to have been disengagement between this strand of Muslim intellectual discourse and Christian theology. From the Muslim side, at least, there is a sense of an encounter having been won and an opponent overcome. Christianity was marginalised, and undeserving of serious intellectual attention.

Certainly, the four excerpts presented here give the strong impression that this was the case. Their developed confidence in their own rightness is palpable, and their ability to counter any arguments or propositions that conflicted with their own irrepressible. Three of them come from giants of Islamic theology, al-Māturīdī the putative founder of the Māturīdī school, one of the two main traditions of Sunnī theol-

<sup>27</sup> Below pp. 362–363, §76.

<sup>28</sup> It is telling that the only known Christian response to any of these works was al-Ṣafī Ibn al-'Assāl's refutation of al-Nāshī' al-Akbar in the seventh/thirteenth century; see below pp. 19–20.

ogy; al-Bāqillānī, the consolidator of the Ash‘arī school, the other main tradition of Sunnī theology; and ‘Abd al-Jabbār, the leading Mu‘tazilī theologian of his day. The fourth comes from the rather wayward Baghdad Mu‘tazilī al-Nāshī’ al-Akbar, and it owes its survival to the Christian refutation where parts are quoted and answered. Together they give a vivid and consummate account of Muslim theological attitudes towards Christianity in the fourth/tenth century. While this is inevitably one-sided and cannot claim to be complete, it bears testimony to what appears to be a decline in Christian intellectual stature under the strong and vigorous flourishing of Islamic theology. The latter could afford increasingly to ignore Christianity and other rival religious claims as its coherence and completeness were made unmistakably evident. The consequence was growing indifference to Christian intellectual traditions, and a parting of ways that had previously appeared to run together. The separation was established, with few signs of further convergence.

## CHAPTER TWO

### AL-NĀSHI' AL-AKBAR

The first of these texts comes from the late third/ninth century Mu'tazilī scholar Abū al-ʿAbbās ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad al-Anbārī, known as Ibn Shirshīr (or simply Shirshīr) and more widely as al-Nāshī' al-Akbar.<sup>1</sup> Little is known about his life, other than that he was employed in Baghdad as a government official, *kātib*,<sup>2</sup> until about 280/893, when he moved to Egypt, and that he died in 293/906.

Al-Nāshī' was an elder contemporary of the Baṣra Mu'tazilī Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī, but unlike him was not known for major teachings about the faith. He did hold some strikingly original views about God's radical distinctiveness from creation and about human responsibility for which he was sometimes mocked or condemned as an atheist,<sup>3</sup> but he was better known for his criticisms of proponents of Greek thought, including the philosopher Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī,<sup>4</sup> and of grammarians and poets. Among the extant fragments of his works, his own poetry is prominent.<sup>5</sup>

None of al-Nāshī's works has survived intact. The heresiography we are concerned with here has come down in what appears to be a series of excerpts made in the seventh/thirteenth century by the Egyptian Coptic scholar Abū al-Faḍā'il al-Ṣafī Ibn al-ʿAssāl (d. before 658/1260) from a copy of the work that had been made in 311/923 by the Bagh-

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ed. M. Riḍā-Tajaddud, Tehran, 1971, p. 217/trans. B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, New York, 1970, p. 423; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Kūtab tabāqāt al-Mu'tazila*, ed. S. Diwald-Wilzer, *Die Klassen der Mu'taziliten*, Beirut, 1988, pp. 92.16–93.4; *ET*<sup>2</sup>, vol. VII, art. 'Al-Nāshī' al-Akbar'.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 192/Dodge, p. 369 (there is uncertainty over the reading of his name at this point).

<sup>3</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, pp. 220, 401/Dodge, pp. 431, 804. On al-Nāshī's theology, cf. J. van Ess, *Frühe mu'tazilitische Häresiographie*, Beirut, 1971, pp. 123–154 (German); *idem*, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra, eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, Berlin, 1991–1995, vol. IV, pp. 141–146.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. and French trans. C. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, Paris, 1861–1877, vol. II, p. 244 (cf. vol. VII, pp. 88–89).

<sup>5</sup> Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. VI, pp. 366–368, gives a list of al-Nāshī's known works.

dad Jacobite scholar Yahyā Ibn ‘Adī.<sup>6</sup> Ibn al-‘Assāl’s purpose was to refute al-Nāshī’s arguments, and since his interests were understandably focused on what al-Nāshī/ had said about Christianity, he seems to have quoted most fully from this section of the work. His editing activity makes it difficult to see what the original comprised in its entirety, though some inferences can be drawn from what remains.

Ibn al-‘Assāl quotes summaries of belief, together with al-Nāshī’s counter arguments, for the following: dualist groups including Marcionites and Zoroastrians, with references to the Manichaeans though their teachings are not summarised, Jews, Christians, Muslims including the Murji’a and Mu’tazila and such prominent individuals as Abū al-Hudhayl and al-Nazzām, and philosophers including Aristotle. If these excerpts cover the total extent of the work, it appears to have been a heresiography in the same tradition as the great compendiums of Ibn Ḥazm and al-Shahrastānī in later centuries, and of lesser known works from the third/ninth century which are now lost.<sup>7</sup> These include the *K. al-milal wa-al-duwal (Religions and States)* of the astronomer Abū Ma’shar Ja’far b. Muḥammad al-Balkhī (d. 272/886), the *K. al-maqālāt (Doctrines)* of Abū Ya’lā Muḥammad b. Shaddād al-Misma’ī, known as Zurqān (d. c. 278/891), the *K. al-athīr (Beginnings)* of Abū al-‘Abbās al-Īrānshahrī (fl. c. 275/888), the unfinished *K. al-ārā’ wa-al-diyānāt (Opinions and Faiths)* of Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī (d. before 310/922), and the *K. maqālāt ghayr al-Islāmiyyīn (The Doctrines of the non-Muslims)* of al-Nāshī’s younger contemporary Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ismā’īl al-Ash‘arī (d. 324/935), which was longer than his well-known *K. maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn (The Doctrines of the Muslims)*.

According to the information furnished by their titles and what was said about them in later times, all these works appear to have been written about a range of faiths other than their authors’ own. They were probably descriptive in character, though they may also have included refutations as well. Other works from this period were certainly polemical. Among others, these include the *K. ‘alā al-Majūs (Against the Zoroastrians)*, *K. ‘alā al-thanawiyya (Against the Dualists)*, *K. al-radd ‘alā al-adyān (Refutation of the Beliefs)*, *K. ‘alā al-Yahūd (Against the Jews)*, *K. ‘alā al-Naṣārā (Against the Christians)* and *K. ‘alā ‘Ammār al-Naṣrānī fī al-radd ‘alā al-Naṣārā (Against ‘Ammār the Christian in Refutation of the*

<sup>6</sup> Van Ess, *Häresiographie*, pp. 19, 61 (German), based upon details given in the MS.

<sup>7</sup> On the following works, cf. G. Monnot, ‘Les écrits musulmans sur les religions non-bibliques’, *Islam et Religions*, Paris, 1986, (pp. 39–82) pp. 52–59.

Christians) of the Mu'tazilī Abū al-Hudhayl,<sup>8</sup> and the *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-Manāniyya fī al-'ashr masā'il fī mawḍū'āt al-falak* (Letter of Refutation against the Manichaeans about the Ten Questions concerning Topics of the Heavens), *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-thanawiyya* (Letter in Refutation of the Dualists) and *Risāla fī iftirāq al-mīlāl fī al-tawḥīd wa-annahum mujmī'un 'alā al-tawḥīd wa-kull khālafa ṣāhibahu* (Letter on the division between the religions concerning God's oneness, that despite each differing from another they all agree on God's oneness) of the philosopher Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī. It is evident that many early Muslim works on other religions contained both descriptive accounts and counter arguments. They not only anticipated al-Nāshi's work, but may have provided a range of possible sources.

One work from this time about which we can know a little more than these other third/ninth century heresiographies is the *Kitāb maqālāt al-nās wa-ikhtilāfihim* (The Teachings of People and their Differences) of the independent Shī'ī scholar Abū 'Īsā Muḥammad b. Hārūn al-Warrāq (d. after 250/864). Although it too is lost, it is referred to by a number of later authors who give enough information about it to permit a general reconstruction of its contents.<sup>9</sup> It included accounts of the following: dualist religions including Manichaeans, Mazdakians, Daysanites, Marcionites and Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, Shī'ī Muslims, and maybe pre-Islamic Arabs. From what can be gathered from lengthy quotations on dualist beliefs in later works<sup>10</sup> and from Abū 'Īsā's own detailed account of Christian beliefs in his extant *Radd 'alā al-thalāth firaq min al-Naṣārā* (Refutation of the Three Christian Sects),<sup>11</sup> it would appear that this was an elaborate description of the major religions known in the Islamic world in Abū 'Īsā's day (there are no signs that it contained any references to Indian religions, distinguishing it from some contemporary works). Unlike al-Nāshi's work, though like al-Shahrastānī's *K. al-mīlāl wa-al-niḥāl* (The Book of Religions and Creeds) of the sixth/twelfth century, Abū 'Īsā's *K. al-maqālāt* does not appear to have included argu-

<sup>8</sup> The last three are added to Monnot's list from Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 204/Dodge, p. 388.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. D. Thomas, 'Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq and the History of Religions', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 41, 1996, pp. 275–290.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. W. Madelung, 'Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq über die Bardesaniten, Marcioniten und Kantäer', in H.R. Roemer and A. Noth, eds, *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Vorderen Orients: Festschrift für Bertold Spuler zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*, Leiden, 1981, pp. 210–224 (repr. in W. Madelung, *Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam*, London, 1985, no. XX); M. McDermott, 'Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq on the Dahriyyah', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 50, 1984, pp. 385–402.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 66–77.

ments against these religions, but was purely descriptive in character. However, Abū ʿĪsā clearly supplemented it with a number of works in which his purpose was refutation, including the attack on Christian denominations just mentioned, which appeared in long, medium and shorter (*al-kabīr*, *al-awṣaṭ* and *al-aṣghar*) versions, *K. iqtīṣāṣ madhāhib aṣḥāb al-ithnayn wa-al-radd ʿalayhim* (*An Accurate Account of the Teachings of the Followers of Dualism and a Refutation against them*), *Radd ʿalā al-Majūs* (*Refutation of the Zoroastrians*) and *Radd ʿalā al-Yahūd* (*Refutation of the Jews*).<sup>12</sup>

Al-Nāshi's work thus appears to have conformed to a well-established tradition of descriptive and polemical works on both non-Islamic religions and philosophies and views expressed within Islam. It is more than likely that he actually used some of them in his accounts and arguments, though since none of them survives and his own extant fragments are silent about his sources, little can be said about this. His work stands as one of the earliest accessible examples of what was a thriving genre of literature from a period in which Muslims began to show fascination for the variety of religious expression they encountered. They did so out of simple curiosity, but also out of a probable concern to delineate what was right and wrong in belief, and so to distinguish the teachings of their own faith from anything that might seem to resemble it.

The real character of al-Nāshi's heresiography is difficult to discern since there are no means of telling how much Ibn al-ʿAssāl cut out. The latter says that he has abridged the work, *fa-akhtaṣiru taʿlīqihī/taʿlīqa min kitāb ʿAbdillāh al-Nāshī fī al-maqālāt*,<sup>13</sup> but does not say how. As they stand, the first two surviving sections on the Dualists and the Jews are extremely short, with the description of Jewish beliefs no more than a single sentence. Given that the later sections on the Christians and Muslims are much more substantial, and considering that the dualist religions and Judaism were targets of numerous attacks from Muslims in the years before al-Nāshi, it is probable that like his predecessors and contemporaries he wrote rather more on them than has survived.

Questions also apply to the section of the work on Christianity, because this has the same truncated character as the preceding sections, despite being one of the longest in the work. As it stands it comprises three main parts: a brief exposition of Christian beliefs, §§ 1–4, short

<sup>12</sup> Thomas, *Incarnation*, p. 34.

<sup>13</sup> Van Ess, *Härestographie*, p. 73 (Arabic). He discusses the precise meaning of these problematic words on pp. 21–24 (German).



accounts of twenty-three sects, §§5–26, and al-Nāshi's own arguments against the Trinity and Incarnation, including some brief arguments against explanations from 'contemporaries', §§27–35. It seems certain that some of the original exposition has been reduced or rearranged, since, for example, while three groups of Melkites are referred to in §15, the second group in the present order is said to be 'earlier than the two preceding sects', *aqdam min al-firqatayn al-awwalatayn*;<sup>14</sup> furthermore, while seven groups of Unitarian Christians are mentioned, only the Arians are described, §26. More broadly, the purpose of the long list of sects in §§5–26 is far from clear. Al-Nāshi' does not return to them in the extant fragments or explain why they are included. It may be that he simply left it to his reader to infer from them the chaotic incoherence of Christianity, but he says nothing about this and one is left to wonder whether a section in which he treated them in order has been omitted. We will return to this matter below.

A last significant question connected with the work is its title. Ibn al-Nadīm refers in the *Fihrist* to a work of Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Nasr al-Jayḥānī, the Sāmānīd vizier in Bukhara whom he elsewhere links with al-Nāshi' among those who had become dualists in recent times,<sup>15</sup> entitled *Kitāb al-ziyādāt fī kitāb al-Nāshi' fī al-maqālāt* (*Additions to al-Nāshi's Book on the Teachings*),<sup>16</sup> but this seems rather a description of the contents than a reference to the work's name. In the same way, the Andalusī Zāhirī scholar Ibn Ḥazm refers in the *K. al-faṣl fī al-mīlāl wa-al-aḥwā' wa-al-niḥāl* to what al-Nāshi' says *fī kitābihi fī al-maqālāt*, 'in his book on the teachings'.<sup>17</sup> These two general references suggest that the work was not known by any distinctive name, and may have simply been referred to as *Fī al-maqālāt*, (*On Teachings*). An introductory sentence in Ibn al-'Assāl's refutation corroborates this. It reads, *fa-akhtaṣīru 'alā ta'līqihī/ta'līqa min kitāb 'Abdillāh al-Nāshi' fī al-maqālāt wa huwa kitāb al-awsaṭ kalama mutaṣaddīqa*, 'on the basis of his copy/an annotated version of 'Abdallāh al-Nāshi's book on the teachings, which is 'the medium book', I am making a summary of passages which are

<sup>14</sup> This follows van Ess' emendations to the text; cf. text p. 50, n. 3 below.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 401/Dodge, p. 804.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153/Dodge, p. 302. There is some confusion over this al-Tayḥānī's name: here it is given as Abū 'Abdallāh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Nasr, while in the previous reference it is given as Muḥammad b. Aḥmad.

<sup>17</sup> Abū Muḥammad Ibn Ḥazm, *K. al-faṣl fī al-mīlāl wa-al-aḥwā' wa-al-niḥāl*, Cairo, 1903, vol. IV, p. 194.

authentic'.<sup>18</sup> A number of problems attach to the precise reading of this sentence,<sup>19</sup> though it makes clear that the book is known as *Fī al-maqālāt* and no more. A final witness repeats the gist of what Ibn al-ʿAssāl says. This is a reference to his reply to al-Nāshī' in the eighth/fourteenth century Shams al-Ri'āsa Abū al-Barakāt Ibn Kabar's catalogue *Miṣbāḥ al-ẓulma* (*The Lamp in the Darkness*), which reads: *jawāb waḍa'ahu 'an kalām 'Abdillāh al-Nāshī' fī al-maqālāt wa huwa al-kitāb al-awsaṭ, akhtaṣara al-Ṣafī ba'da kalāmihi wa-aḡāba 'anhu aḡwibatan mufīdatan li-ta'ammulihā*, 'a reply which he wrote to the arguments of 'Abdallāh al-Nāshī' on the teachings, which is the medium book; al-Ṣafī made excerpts of some of his arguments and gave replies to them which repay reflection'.<sup>20</sup>

An intriguing further point raised in these two latter references is that while al-Nāshī's work was simply *Fī al-maqālāt*, it was also *kitāb al-awsaṭ*, 'the medium book'. This suggests that it may have been a shorter edition of a *kitāb al-kabīr*, 'a long book', and was also accompanied by a *kitāb al-ṣaghīr*, 'a short book', both of them now completely unknown. But this should not come as a surprise when the number of lost works from this period is recalled, and when it is known that the earlier Muslim Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq's *Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā* was also originally issued in three versions, long, medium and short,<sup>21</sup> and that the younger contemporary of al-Nāshī', Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī's *K. al-luma'* was also one of the shorter of three versions, of which it alone is now known.<sup>22</sup>

It thus remains doubtful whether the title of al-Nāshī's work can be known for sure, although it seems clear that it was an abbreviated edition of a book that was known as 'on the teachings', whether this was given by al-Nāshī' himself or not. This title places it alongside such other works as Abū 'Īsā's *K. maqālāt al-nās*, Zurqān's *K. al-maqālāt*, Abū al-Qāsim al-Ka'bī al-Balkhī's *K. al-maqālāt* and al-Ash'arī's *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn* and *Maqālāt ghayr al-islāmiyyīn*.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Van Ess, *Häresiographie*, p. 73 (German).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the long and detailed discussion in van Ess, *Häresiographie*, pp. 21–24.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. W. Riedel, *Der Katalog der christlichen Schriften in arabischer Sprache von Abu 'l-Barakat*, Nachrichten der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Klasse 1902, Heft 5, p. 661.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas, *Incarnation*, p. 34.

<sup>22</sup> McCarthy, *Theology of al-Ash'arī*, pp. 214–215, nos. 10, 12 and 13, translating Ibn 'Asākir, *Tabyīn kadhīb al-muftarī*.

<sup>23</sup> Details in Monnot, 'Écrits musulmans', pp. 54–61.

It is evident that many things can no longer be known about al-Nāshi's work. But some things can be said about it with confidence. The first is that it is undeniably his own composition. This is attested not only by the circumstantial mentions in al-Jayhānī and Ibn Ḥazm, and by the clear line of transmission from Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī, who copied it before 311/923,<sup>24</sup> to al-Ṣafī Ibn al-'Assāl, but also by numerous internal references to al-Nāshi' himself, in the form of *wa-qāla 'Abdallāh*, 'Abdallāh said'. There is no real reason to doubt the authenticity of the work.

It also seems likely that the work was written while al-Nāshi' was living in Baghdad rather than after he moved to Egypt, both because Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī, a later inhabitant, had knowledge of it, and because al-Nāshi' appears to take as his reference group for orthodox Christian teaching the Nestorians, who were strongest in Baghdad and its surroundings. This is clear from the Christological formula he attributes to 'the community' in §3 below, which is characteristically Nestorian, from repeated references in the accounts of the various sects to the extent of their agreements and disagreements with Nestorian teachings, from the transliterated names of many sects, which presuppose Syriac antecedents, and most obviously from the singular absence of the Nestorians from the list of Christian sects, as though they represent the standard by which the others are measured. These items of circumstantial evidence thus suggest that the work was written before about 280/893, the year in which al-Nāshi' left Baghdad.

If the *Fī al-maqālāt* has come down in anything approaching its original state, its examination of Christian beliefs bears features that can be seen in other similar works of the time, most noticeably the combination of a detailed account of Christianity with a refutation that almost completely ignores this. Two other works in which this curious configuration can be found are the *Radd*s of al-Qāsim Ibn Ibrāhīm and Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq.<sup>25</sup>

Al-Nāshi' begins with a general summary of Christian beliefs, §§1–4. He first outlines a model of the Trinity in which, while the three Persons are equal, the Father is the cause of the Son and Holy Spirit, who are effectively attributes of knowledge and life in his being, §1. This

<sup>24</sup> Cf. van Ess, *Hāresiographie*, pp. 61–62, summarising ff. 31<sup>v</sup>–32<sup>r</sup> of the MS.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Thomas, 'Christian Theologians and New Questions'.

is recognisably a development of Cappadocian Trinitarian teachings,<sup>26</sup> and it can be glimpsed in such earlier Christians writing within the Islamic context as John of Damascus, Timothy I, and ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī. It is also found in al-Nāshi’s younger Muslim contemporary Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī,<sup>27</sup> which witnesses to its widespread currency.

He next gives a summary of Christological teaching, that the Son inhered within the human Jesus by will rather than being, §2, and that the human and divine natures remained distinct although they were united in volition and action, so that Christ’s various actions can be categorised as entirely human, entirely divine and both human and divine, §3. The emphasis given here to the distinctiveness of the humanity and divinity in Christ and to their cooperation in action rather than joint activity is clearly Nestorian, and al-Nāshi’ regards it as the normative teaching of ‘the community’, *al-jamā’a*.

Al-Nāshi’ concludes this brief account of doctrines with a list of other Christian beliefs, which centre on the books of the Bible, human responsibility and divine reward and punishment, §4. Focusing on the Trinity and Incarnation, and these subsidiary beliefs, his outline betrays a preoccupation with the two doctrines that directly challenge the Islamic doctrine of *tawḥīd*. There is nothing about a possible reason for the Incarnation or about the atonement (which would surely not have been omitted by Ibn al-‘Assāl if it had been present). So, unlike the comparable earlier authors al-Qāsim Ibn Ibrāhīm and Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq who give full accounts of Christian doctrines,<sup>28</sup> and like Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī who concentrates only on these two doctrines,<sup>29</sup> al-Nāshi’ seems indifferent to Christian beliefs as they are held within the communities, and appears to be primarily interested in those beliefs that can be recognised as alternatives to Muslim doctrines.

From this account of normative Christian teachings, al-Nāshi’ turns to those Christians who ‘differed from the community’, and gives brief outlines of their distinctive beliefs, §§5–26. They are:

*al-Ṣalīhiyya*—the Apostolics  
*al-Malā’ikiyya*—the Angelics  
*al-Niqālūsiyya*—the Nicolaitans  
*al-Ādamiyya*—the Adamites

<sup>26</sup> Cf. G.L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, London, 1952, esp. p. 249.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. n. 5 to the translation.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Thomas, ‘Christian Theologians and New Questions’, pp. 263–264 and 268–269.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. pp. 226–227 below.

*al-Qatharūniyya*—the Cathars  
*al-Nafsāniyya*—the Spiritualists  
*al-Hayyīyya*—the Ophites  
*al-Dīqtāniyya*—the Hieracites  
*al-Maṣallīyyāniyya*—the Mesallians, two sub-groups  
*al-Wālasīyya*—the Valesians  
*al-Malkīyya*—the Melkites, three groups:  
     first group  
     second group, *al-Qūlūrusīyya*—the Qūlūrusites  
     third group, *al-Fadīyya* or *Ṣalḥīyya*—the Redeemed or Pious  
*al-Ishāqīyya*—the Isaacites  
*al-Yamānī*, an individual  
*al-Yā'qūbiyya*—the Jacobites  
*al-Lūliyyāniyya*—the Julianists  
*al-Mārūniyya*—the Maronites  
*al-Afūlḥārīstīyya*—the Apollinarians  
*al-Awṭākhiyya*—the Eutychians  
*al-Wālīntīyya*—the Valentinians  
*al-Aryūsīyya*—the Arians.

As was said above, throughout this list al-Nāshi' repeatedly refers to the Nestorians as the orthodox reference group. And as the notes to the translation show, his descriptions of many of the groups match those to be found in other heresiographical works such the fourth century Epiphanius of Salamis' (d. 403) *Panarion*, the second/eighth century John of Damascus' (d. c. 750) *De Haeresibus*, which was largely dependent on Epiphanius' work, and the second/eighth century Theodore bar Kōnī's *Scholion*.<sup>30</sup> But there is no discernible relationship that might indicate dependence on any of these, and it is likely that here al-Nāshi' was relying upon a lost intermediary, probably in Arabic and possibly part of one of the lost third/ninth century works we have referred to above.

We can go a little further than this. For, as van Ess shows,<sup>31</sup> the order in al-Nāshi's list agrees in some places with that in a work of a certain Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qaḥṭabī, a contemporary of Sa'īd Ibn Baṭrīq (d. 328/939–940).<sup>32</sup> This work is unknown except for its list of sixty Christian sects (including one or two repetitions)

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of Theodore's period of activity, cf. S. Griffith, 'Chapter Ten of the *Scholion*: Theodore Bar Kōnī's Apology for Christianity', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 47, 1981 (pp. 158–188), pp. 161–164.

<sup>31</sup> *Häresiographie*, pp. 81–82.

<sup>32</sup> *Fihrist*, p. 352/Dodge, p. 690.

that is preserved by Ibn al-Nadīm.<sup>33</sup> Over half of the names in al-Nāshī's list and a third of the names in al-Qaḥṭabī's agree (allowing for correction of transcription errors) both in appearance and largely in order, indicating a close relationship between the two. However, any direct relationship is ruled out by lack of correspondence in the remainder of the lists, and so this partial agreement must be explained by a lost source that was used independently by both authors. This clearly relied upon a Syriac rather than Greek original, since the Arabic forms reflect Syriac versions of many sect names.<sup>34</sup> So again we see signs of Nestorian influence.

This denominational background is also reflected in the order that may be discerned in al-Nāshī's source.<sup>35</sup> The list begins with eleven groups that can be distinguished by eccentric and syncretistic beliefs and practices, §§5–14. But then the rest of the list is ordered according to Christological beliefs, headed by the Melkites and related groups, §§15–19, and then the Jacobites and the groups that agreed with them about the single identity of Christ's divine and human natures, §§20–25, and finally the Unitarians represented by the Arians, §26. The original author appears to have maybe listed them according to historical peculiarity, and then according to increasing divergence from the Nestorian norm of Christ's natures remaining separate.

The purpose of this list in al-Nāshī's work is unclear. Al-Nāshī does not refer to any of these groups again either by name or doctrine, and may only have included them because of their curiosity value, leaving

---

<sup>33</sup> *Fihrist*, p. 405/Dodge, pp. 814–816. The agreements read as follows, with al-Nāshī's version of the name and paragraph number given first, followed by al-Qaḥṭabī's version as printed and the number in his order:

*al-Niqālūsiyya* (7)—*al-Biqālūsiyya* (51)  
*al-Ādamiyya* (8)—*al-Ādamiyya* (55)  
*al-Qaṭharūniyya* (9)—*al-ʿAnazūniyya* (57)  
*al-Nafsāniyya* (10)—*al-Nafsāniyya* (58)  
*al-Ḥayyiyya* (11)—*al-Ḥasbiyya* (59)  
*al-Dīqātāniyya* (12)—*al-Dīqātāniyya* (60)  
*al-Ishāqīyya* (18)—*al-Ishāqīyya* (44)  
*al-Yamāniyya* (19)—*al-ʾmāʾʾa* (45) (some letters are unpointed)  
*al-Lūliyāniyya* (21)—*al-Mūliyāniyya* (47)  
*al-Mārūniyya* (22)—*al-Mārūniyya* (46 and 8)  
*al-Afūlnāristiyya* (23)—*al-Aqūliyāristiyya* (48)  
*al-Awṭākhiyya* (24)—*al-Awṭākhiyya* (49)  
*al-Wālīntiyya* (25)—*al-Bawālīntariyya* (50).

<sup>34</sup> Van Ess, *Häresiographie*, p. 84.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

the list to speak for itself of the unhealthy confusion to which Christianity is prone. The other possibility, that Ibn al-ʿAssāl has omitted a whole section of al-Nāshi's work in which he examined each sect in turn, is rather less likely in view of what can be discerned of the Muslim's arguments against Christian doctrines that now follow. These are general in the extreme and barely related to the initial exposition of Christian doctrines.

These arguments make up the third part of the work, §§27–35. They can be divided into refutations of Christians who rely on the witness of scripture, §27, of those who employ reason, §§28–34, and certain Christian 'contemporaries', *qawm min muḥdathihim*, who evidently employed a form of explanation that al-Nāshi regarded as innovatory, §35.

Against Christians who draw on scripture alone, al-Nāshi argues that favourite texts give no warrant for belief in any of the doctrines that typify Christianity. Thus the resort to Matthew 28.19, 'Baptize people in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit', provides no justification for belief in the divine substance and hypostases, while a verse such as John 20.17, 'I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God', rules out belief that Jesus was the divine Son. Furthermore, these people by their own principles exclude all authorities except the Gospel and so cannot refer to any prophetic utterance to support them, §27. What exactly al-Nāshi means by this is not immediately clear as the text stands. If in his words 'They cannot claim that Jesus was Son of God arising from what the prophet informed them about this' he means to refer to Muḥammad, then he must be contending that these Christians might have been able to adduce favourable verses from the Qur'an to support their point, such as the references to Jesus as word and spirit of God, Q 3.45, 4.171, etc., although their own rules will not allow them to. But the bare mention of 'the prophet' for Muḥammad without any formula of blessing is peculiar in a Muslim author, and the form 'arising from what the prophet informed them about this' seems awkward and uncharacteristic as a way of referring to the Qur'an. A preferable explanation might be that he is referring to the Old Testament prophetic books in which Christians see predictions of Christ, though his condensing all of these into the one representative 'the prophet' is again peculiar. But if this is what he means, his argument that these Christians are barred from such texts because they restrict themselves to the *Injīl* alone presupposes an invented group who conform more to the expectations of the Qur'an than they would

adhere to their one revealed text and no other parts of the Bible rather than any real Christian group.

Al-Nāshī's main arguments based on rational grounds which come next are equally brief. He interprets the Incarnation as a change of being on the part of the divine and human subjects, and refutes it by arguing that what is fixed in its being, and the Eternal must be fixed, cannot change into something contrary to itself, §28. This is a stark summary of complicated Christian doctrines, and a peremptory refutation of them. But al-Nāshī's evident purpose is to reduce the opponents' teachings to what he sees as a representative form in order to expose its irrationality. In doing so, he employs the typically Muslim rejection of the notion that the divine could ever come into proximity to the human, because this would threaten all that could be said about transcendence and otherness. The difference between his and his opponents' presuppositions is strikingly clear here.

Following this denial that the divine and human could come together in Christ, al-Nāshī turns to the crucifixion, §§29–31. He briefly points out that if the divine nature was not affected by Christ's death the teaching has no consequence, while if the divine nature was affected the teaching must be incoherent because God cannot die, §29. Pressing this further, he then shows that the special case pleaded by some Christians that Christ only died in his human aspect cannot separate the divine nature from death. Any being that dies is only touched by death in some of its aspects, in the sense that while it no longer has life it retains its colour and form. It is, however, dead. In the same way, the divine nature of Christ must have been touched by death when his human nature died, unless this special case suggests that a being different from the divine and human individual whom the Christians portray underwent the crucifixion, §30.

Al-Nāshī does not name the group who favour this distinction, though they appear to be one of those who teach that the divine and human natures became identified in some way in the Incarnation, possibly the Melkites, and particularly the Qūlūrusites, §16, or the Jacobites. This becomes apparent when he goes on to apply the same arguments to those who say Christ was two substances and hypostases and that he only died in his human aspect, §31. These are evidently the Nestorians, whose Christology he summarises at the beginning of his discussion, §3.

His one point in all these arguments is that God does not come into proximity with a contingent being or undergo the experiences of



a creature. In striving to maintain this he places himself alongside the other Muslim theologians included in this study, as well as others who denounced the Christian doctrine. The fact that he does not examine the details of what his opponents try to explain, but reduces their models to a simple case of the Divinity becoming implicated in the experiences of the human Jesus, both shows that he himself held too strongly to the belief in the transcendence of God to countenance Christian explanations, and suggests that those explanations were regarded as too far-fetched to command serious attention from Muslim theologians.

Al-Nāshi' now moves to the Trinity, and directs his arguments against the three hypostases. He picks up what is said in the initial exposition that the Father is cause to the Son and Holy Spirit although all three are entirely equal, §1, and points out that if two things are utterly identical, as the Christians say the hypostases are, one cannot be the cause of the other. He underlines the ridiculousness of the Christian claim by showing that they both make distinctions between the three Persons and also insist there is no distinction between them, §32.

The argument now takes a potentially positive turn that shows there were Christians strenuously attempting to explain their doctrine in terms that Muslims would appreciate and maybe accept. An anonymous group, who al-Nāshi' simply labels 'people among them', *qawm minhum*, suggest a comparison between the three hypostases in their own theology and the accidental attributes of contingent things in the *kalām* in order to show how entities can be both entirely congruent with one another and also endowed with individual distinctions, §33.

According to *kalām* logic, accidents were the source of the qualities of material beings. Although they themselves were uncharacterisable, they gave bodies the qualities that were uniquely theirs by inhering within them. Thus, in respect of being accidents they were undifferentiated, while in respect of being accidents of different qualities, they could be distinguished. In a clever play that may or may not have been intended as a constructive comparison, the Christians centre on these aspects, and argue that like accidents the divine hypostases can be considered both distinct and uniform. Al-Nāshi', however, will have none of this, and shows in a number of ways how the comparison is inappropriate. Firstly, and in an obvious way that makes one wonder how well the Christians had grasped the meaning of their analogy, he argues that since accidents are formally discrete from the material bodies in which they come to inhere, it follows that the hypostases would by analogy

have to be separate from the substance of the Godhead, meaning that there must be multiplicity within it. Secondly, and less obviously, if any entities are both distinct and uniform, then logically this must arise either from themselves, which is nonsense, or from a cause outside themselves, which is sensible but in the case of the hypostases would entail an additional causal entity within the Godhead. And thirdly, two different colours can only be said to be uniform as colours by someone looking at them, in other words an external agent, and so it follows that the hypostases can only be said to be uniform or distinct by virtue of an external entity within the Godhead.

In these ways al-Nāshi' destroys the analogy, and confirms his earlier argument that the doctrine of the Trinity is incoherent. There he shows that beings who are distinguished by a causal relationship cannot be equal, and here he dismisses any possibility of them being both identical and distinct.

In a final step in his arguments against the Trinity, al-Nāshi' argues against a group who postulate a hierarchy within the Godhead (maybe his understanding of the Arian position) by saying that as long as the hypostases are thought to be identical as substance they can only be distinguished by an extraneous cause, thus requiring an additional entity within the Godhead, §34.

Throughout these arguments against the Trinity al-Nāshi's single point is that since the doctrine entails beings who are distinct in themselves and yet uniform with each other it is rationally unsustainable, because no being can possess opposite characteristics such as these. He rejects Christian attempts at explanation, and in addition shows no interest in exploring the structure of the doctrine in itself, insisting only that it does not make sense.

In what has the appearance of an addition to these structured arguments which refer back to the brief exposition at the beginning, al-Nāshi' concludes his examination by refuting an explanation of the Trinity put forward by people he calls Christian contemporaries. Like the analogy between the hypostases and accidents, this seems to employ concepts from Islamic theology to make its case.<sup>36</sup>

On the surface the explanation is quite simple: the design that is evident in the universe is proof that it has a Maker who must be knowing

---

<sup>36</sup> On this explanation and al-Nāshi's response, cf. D. Thomas, 'Early Muslim Responses to Christianity', in D. Thomas, *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule*, Leiden, 2003, (pp. 231–254) pp. 232–235.

and living, on the grounds that all intentional beings have these qualities, and so he must have the attributes of life and knowledge, §35. The argument from design alluded to here may come from ancient sources, but the latter step of equating God's qualities of knowing and living with his possessing attributes of knowledge and life is characteristically Muslim. The issue of God's attributes had been acknowledged in Islamic circles for a good century, and its implications continued to be hotly debated. The Mu'tazilīs such as Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī denied that they were anything more than human descriptions of God with nothing that corresponded to them in the being of God himself,<sup>37</sup> while more traditional thinkers such as Abū 'Alī's pupil Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī accepted earlier explanations that the attributes were discrete realities within the being of God, 'neither God nor other than him'.<sup>38</sup> The Mu'tazilīs risked portraying God as stripped of all characteristics in the interests of maintaining his unity, while the Ash'arīs risked surrendering this in the interests of portraying him in positive terms. The Christians mentioned here evidently make use of the latter interpretation, and take it further to suggest that God's attributes of knowledge and life are in fact the Son and Holy Spirit as endowers of the qualities of knowing and living upon the being of God. They may, in fact, include the early third/ninth century Nestorian 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, who attracted Abū al-Hudhayl's attention<sup>39</sup> for his argument that God's attributes must be real, and that among them the two attributes of life and knowledge have priority over others as integral to the essence of God.<sup>40</sup>

This Christian coinage is elegantly simple, like their analogy between accidents and hypostases. But as with that earlier borrowing, al-Nāshi' rejects this chain of logic entirely, producing six brief arguments to show that its ramifications effectively destroy it. The first four of these verge on sophistry, doing no more than drawing out awkward implications in the explanation, though the last two have more weight in showing in terms of Greek philosophy that the hypostases must be members of a class, and that if God is substance and the human is substance then these two are also members of a class. This is devastating for

<sup>37</sup> Cf. al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, ed. H. Ritter, Istanbul, 1930, e.g. pp. 524.4–525.6.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p. 169.12–13.

<sup>39</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 204.21/Dodge, p. 388.

<sup>40</sup> K. al-burhān, ed. M. Hayek, *'Ammār al-Baṣrī, theologie et controverses*, Beirut, 1977, pp. 46–49.

these Christians because it brings God into the realm of composite and contingent being.

With these crushing arguments al-Nāshī's examination of Christianity is brought to an end. Clearly, as it stands it is only a partial examination, because as we have said above it focuses only on the doctrines of the Incarnation and Trinity and ignores other key elements of Christian belief. But since this is a characteristic of many Muslim works from this period, there is no reason to think that it ever went further than this. It evidently conforms to a genre of refutations in which the primary concern is more to disparage those elements that come closest to destabilising Muslim doctrines than to take the contours of Christianity as they are held by Christians and subject them to examination. So this, in effect, is a brief but eloquent example of an apology for Islam in the form of a refutation of Christianity.

The *Fī al-maqālāt* has survived in this truncated form thanks to al-Ṣaḥī Ibn al-ʿAssāl in the seventh/thirteenth century, who made excerpts from a fourth/tenth century copy of the work made by Yaḥyā Ibn ʿAdī.<sup>41</sup> It is extant in a single manuscript containing a number of Christian works which is kept in the Library of the Coptic Patriarchate in Cairo. This was copied in 1168/1752. In Simaika's catalogue it is number 370, and in Graf's catalogue it is number 418.<sup>42</sup>

The basis of the edition and translation below is the excellent edition of the work made by J. van Ess. He made sense of a number of clearly written though incomprehensible readings, and his edition has largely been followed here. It has, however, been compared with the original, and occasionally a different reading or interpretation is preferred. In the textual notes, the reading of the MS is indicated by ق, and van Ess's reading by ف.

---

<sup>41</sup> Cf. K. Samir, *Al-Ṣaḥī Ibn al-ʿAssāl, brefs chapitres sur la Trinité et l'Incarnation (Patrologia Orientalis 42)*, Turnhout, 1985, p. 647 [35], where Ibn al-ʿAssāl's reply is listed among his other works. Samir announces here that he intends to publish an edition of this work, but this has not appeared.

<sup>42</sup> G. Graf, *Catalogue de manuscrits arabes chrétiens conservés au Caire, (Studi e Testi 63)*, Vatican City, 1934, pp. 152–153, no. 418; M. Simaika Pasha, *Catalogue of the Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in the Coptic Museum, the Patriarchate, the Principal Churches of Cairo and Alexandria and the Monasteries of Egypt*, vol. II, Cairo, 1942, p. 161, no. 370.

Al-Nāshi' al-Akbar

*Al-Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*  
*min*  
*Fī al-Maqālāt*

1. قال عبد الله: وقد اختلفت النصارى، فمنها الموحّد ومنها المثلث. فأما المثلث فقوم منهم زعموا أنّ الباري ثلاثة أقنومات جوهر واحد، أب وابن وروح قدس، فالجوهر هو الأقانيم معمولاً.<sup>1</sup> وزعموا أنّ الأب منها علّة الابن والروح من غير أن يتقدّمهما بالذات بل هما معه سواء.<sup>2</sup> وسمّوا

---

<sup>1</sup>ق: مغموماً أو مفهوماً؛ ف: مغموماً. <sup>2</sup>ف || ق: مهياً معاً.

[*On the Doctrines: against the Christians*]

1. ‘Abdallāh said: The Christians have differences, with Unitarians and Trinitarians among them.<sup>1</sup>

The Trinitarians: People among them claim that the Creator is three hypostases and one substance,<sup>2</sup> Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with the substance being the hypostases in a general way.<sup>3</sup> They claim that of these the Father is the cause of the Son and Spirit, without preceding

---

<sup>1</sup> This rather theoretical division suggests at the outset the formulaic character of al-Nāshī’s approach, and indicates his criterion for categorising the Christians in their teachings about the nature of God.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Nāshī’ evidently does not consider that the terms *uqnūm/uqnūmāt* and *jawhar*, which had been current in Arabic religious literature for about a century, require any explanation.

<sup>3</sup> The appearance of the Arabic term used here is unclear in the MS. Al-Nāshī’ himself gives no help, because he does not repeat the term and hardly refers to the substance in his main argument against the Trinity, §§ 32–34, or in the concluding series of brief responses to ‘contemporaries’ in § 35.

Earlier in the third/ninth century Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī describes the substance as *al-jawhar alladhī ‘ammahā [al-aqānīm]* (A. Périer, ‘Un traité de Yahyā ben ‘Adī’, *Revue de l’Orient Chrétien* 22, 1920–1921, p. 4.4), and Abū ‘Isā similarly says, *yujmī‘uhā al-jawhar al-wāḥid al-‘amm* (Thomas, *Trinity*, p. 66.13). On the basis of these, the reading followed here is معموما.

الابن عِلْمِ الباريء والروح حياته. فهذا ما اتَّفقت عليه الجماعة إلّا مَنْ نحن ذاكروه.

2. ثمَّ اختلفوا فقالت الجماعة إنّ الابن هو الكلمة وإنَّه حلَّ في إنسان تامّ كامل خُلِق من زرع مريم العذراء<sup>1</sup> بلا جماع. وزعموا أنّ حلول الكلمة في ذلك الإنسان إنّما هو بالمسرّة لا بالجوهر ولا التركيب ولا الإمتزاج ولا الإختلاط ولا الانتقال من مكان إلى مكان لأنّ كلّ واحد من الثلاثة القائمة<sup>2</sup> غير محدود ولا جائز<sup>3</sup> عليه النقلة. وزعموا أنّ ذلك الإنسان إنّما دُعي ابنًا لمكان الابن الذي حلّته كما يُدعى الحديد نارًا إذا حلّه النار.

---

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: العدرى. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: القليمة. <sup>3</sup> ف || ق: جابر.



them in essence, but rather they are equal with him.<sup>4</sup> They call the Son the Creator's Knowledge and the Spirit his Life.<sup>5</sup>

This is what the community agree on, except for those we are about to mention.

2. Then they differ. The community say that the Son is the Word, and that he inhered within a complete and perfect man created from the seed of the Virgin Mary without intercourse. They claim that the inhering of the Word in this man was by volition alone not by substance, composition, mixing, mingling or removal from one location to another, because each of the three existences is without limit and movement is inappropriate for it. They claim that this man was only called Son because of the locating of the Son who inhered within him, just as iron is called fire if fire inheres within it.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> This model of the Trinity is a simplification of the classical Christian doctrine, in which the Son is begotten of the Father and the Spirit proceeds from him, into direct causal relationships. It is a great deal more stark than the summary given by Abū 'Īsā, which faithfully reproduces the Christian version (Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 66–69, §§6–7), and less impartial even than Abū 'Alī's schematic version, which identifies the Son and Spirit as the Father's Word and Life ('Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* below pp. 226–227, §1), but stops short of explicitly saying that he is their cause (though see the last paragraph of 'Abd al-Jabbār's quotation of his exposition).

<sup>5</sup> This identification of the Son and Spirit is known with some variations in authors active within the Islamic world from the second/eighth century on, e.g. John of Damascus in *De Haeresibus* and *Disputatio Saraceni et Christiani* (in D.J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, Leiden, 1972, pp. 136–137 and 148–151), the Patriarch Timothy I in his defence before al-Mahdī (A. Mingana, 'The Apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph Mahdī', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 12, 1928, pp. 158ff.), and the Nestorian Christian 'Ammār al-Baṣrī in his *kalām*-based exposition of Christianity (Hayek, *'Ammār al-Baṣrī*, e.g. p. 48.20). Abū 'Alī also refers to it with a brevity that suggests the same familiarity as al-Nāshī' ('Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, below pp. 226–227, §1).

It is clear from his argument below in §35 that al-Nāshī' follows the trend in regarding the Son and Spirit as attributes of the Father, though here he evidently does not think it necessary to make this identification explicit.

<sup>6</sup> The terminology and forms of description given here are in general familiar from earlier in the third/ninth century; cf. in particular Abū 'Īsā (in Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 86–89, §§9–11), who however differs in saying that some Christians regard these terms as very apt for this purpose. The term *masarra* and the emphasis given to the mode of uniting as by the divine will alone are not so familiar from earlier authors, though later in the fourth/tenth century 'Abd al-Jabbār makes a great deal of it; below, pp. 306–316, §§46–49. It has the character of a Nestorian interpretation of the act of Uniting, and may be a Muslim inference from some of the instrumentalist Christological explanations that Abū 'Īsā documents, e.g. that the divine 'did not come to dwell in [Jesus] but controlled affairs by means of him and appeared to mankind through him' (Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 88–89, §11).

3. قالوا: فقولك "المسيح" اسمٌ واقع على الجوهرين جميعاً والشخصين جميعاً لا على أحدهما، والشخصان معنًى واحد في المسيحية. وزعموا أن فعلهما واحد ومسرّتهما واحدة، وصرفوا كل ما قيل في المسيح على ثلاث<sup>1</sup> جهات. إحداها<sup>2</sup> زعموا أن تليق بالإنسان خاصّة ولا تليق بالله كالولادة والأكل والشرب والصليب والموت والدفن والصعود إلى السماء، فقالت: هذا كلّهُ للإنسان خاصّة؛ فإذا سئلت عن المسيح أُمات وصُلب ودُفن وأكل وشرب، قالوا: نعم، بجهة ناسوته.

قالوا: والثانية تليق بالله عزّ وجلّ كقولنا "الأزليّ الذي لا يموت"، فإذا قيل لها: أوكيس المسيح الذي مات هو الذي لم يمت والذي صُلب هو الذي لم يُصَلب والذي حدث بعد أن لم يكن هو الذي لم يزل كذلك؟ قالوا: نعم، من جهة ناسوته وهو هكذا بجهة لاهوته.

والثالثة زعموا أنّها بالله عزّ وجلّ وبالإنسان جميعاً مثل فعل الآيات وإحياء الموتى والمشي على الماء، فزعموا أن هذه<sup>3</sup> أفاعيل الله بالإنسان كالنار بالحديد.

4. وأقرّت بالأنبياء المقدّمين كلّهم و التوراة والإنجيل والكتب العتيقة والحديثة وكتاب السليح بولس وأقاصيص الرُسل والثواب والعقاب وبعث

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: ثلاثة. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: إحداها. <sup>3</sup> ف || ق: هذا.

3. They say: This term 'Christ' is a name which applies to the two substances together and the two individuals together not to one of them, and the two individuals were one actuality in the Christ nature. They claim that the action of both and the volition of both were one.<sup>7</sup> And they direct all that is said about Christ along three ways.

One is that they claim there are characteristics that apply to the human and not to God such as being born, eating, drinking, crucifixion, death, burial and ascension to heaven. So they say: All these are characteristics of the human; and if they are asked whether Christ died, was crucified and buried, ate and drank, they say: Yes, in his human aspect.

They say: The second apply to God, great and mighty, such as our statement, 'The eternal who does not die'. And if they are asked: Is not Christ who died the one who did not die, and the one who was crucified the one who was not crucified, and the one who came into being after he did not exist the one who was nevertheless eternal?; they will say: Yes, in his human aspect and his divine aspect respectively.

The third they claim are of God, great and mighty, and of the human together, such as performing miracles, raising the dead and walking on the water. So they claim that these were feats of God through the human, like fire through iron.

4. They acknowledge all the ancient prophets, the Torah and the Gospel, the old and new books, the book of the Apostle Paul, the accounts of the Apostles, reward and punishment, and the resurrection

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 72–73, §14, where he represents the Nestorians as saying that Christ was two substances and two hypostases with one will, *jawharāni wa-qunūmāni mashi'a wāḥida*. As is strongly intimated in a number of places below, al-Nāshi' or his source appears to regard the Nestorians as the normative Christian community.

الأجساد،<sup>1</sup> وقالت بالعدل والاستطاعة قبل الفعل إلا قوماً سنذكرهم.

5. فإنهم خالفوا الجماعة في أشياء ثم اختلفوا، فقالت السليحية<sup>2</sup> منها بترك التزويج والنكاح ومنعوا معهم<sup>3</sup> ممن لم يقل ذلك، ولم يسكنوا المدن وزعموا أنهم مثل الحواريين.

6. وقالت الملائكية: إننا نحن في<sup>4</sup> زى الملائكة، وزعموا أن الملائكة يأتونهم في السر فيكرمونه.

---

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: تعب الأخبار. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: السليحية. <sup>3</sup> ق || ف: (من) معهم. <sup>4</sup> ف || ق: ففي.

of bodies, and they teach about justice and capacity before the act,<sup>8</sup> with the exception of those people we are about to mention.<sup>9</sup>

5. These diverged from the community on some matters and then differed. Thus, the Apostolics among them taught that marrying and intercourse should be given up, and they debarred those with them who did not declare this. They never dwelt in towns, and they claimed that they were like the disciples.<sup>10</sup>

6. The Angelics said: We are in the guise of angels; and they claimed that the angels came to them in secret to honour them.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> This list combines items that are recognisably Christian, the Old and New Testaments, Letters of Paul, Acts of the Apostles; distinctively Muslim, the former prophets, the Torah and Gospel, and maybe reward and punishment and bodily resurrection; and specifically Mu'tazili, divine justice and capacity before the act (the doctrine that God creates in humans the ability to perform acts for themselves and thus to be morally responsible). It suggests that the Christians known to al-Nāshi' had espoused certain Muslim principles and expressed their beliefs in terms familiar to Mu'tazili thinkers.

<sup>9</sup> The following list of twenty-three Christian sects is an impressive indication of al-Nāshi's awareness of the variety among Christian beliefs. It raises the obvious question of sources, though answers are not readily forthcoming; cf. pp. 25–28 above for a discussion about what can be known about these. The absence of an entry on the Nestorians, and comparisons between the teachings of a number of sects and theirs may suggest the underlying source was Nestorian.

Many lost Muslim works on non-Muslim religions from the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries are known (Monnot, 'Écrits musulmans', pp. 50–57), and al-Nāshi' presumably used one or more of these. When one recalls that in the decades before al-Nāshi', Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq in his lost *Maqālāt al-nās* is known to have referred to a number of Christian sects, and may have listed seventy (Thomas, 'History of Religions', pp. 276–277), the plausibility of this is increased. It is tempting to think of Abū 'Isā's work as al-Nāshi's direct source, but disagreement over the transliteration of the names of sects (van Ess, *Häresiographie*, p. 81) rules this out.

<sup>10</sup> The *Salḥiyya* (corrected from *Salḥa*), according to Epiphanius, *Panarion* §61 (cf. John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §61, Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §54), were found mainly in Phrygia, Cilicia and Pamphylia; in an attempt to live like the Apostles they gave up possessions and abandoned marriage.

<sup>11</sup> The *Malā'ikiyya* were known to Epiphanius, *Panarion* §60, only by name and he could do no more than conjecture about its meaning, while John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §60, thought they had disappeared and suggested that they 'either claimed to belong to an angelic order, or [they got their name] from their practice of invoking the angels' (Chase, *Saint John of Damascus*, p. 126; cf. Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §53). Clearly, al-Nāshi's source is either better informed or more imaginative.

7. وقالت النقالوسية<sup>1</sup> منهم بترك التزويج، وحثّوا على المعروف وعظّموا نيقالوس حاضر الحواريين.

8. وأمّا الآدمية<sup>2</sup> فإنّهم يدخلون إلى بيعهم عراً مثل آدم وحواء<sup>1</sup> ويسمّون بيعهم الجنة، ويحرّمون النكاح.

9. وأمّا القثرونية<sup>2</sup> فقولهم قول نسطور لا يُترك منه شيء، إلّا أنّهم يزعمون أنّ من أذنب لم يُغفر له بعد مجيئ المسيح.

10. والنفسانية لا تحرّم من قول نسطور شيئاً، إلّا أنّهم يزعمون أنّ الإنسان إذا مات ماتت نفسه كما يموت جسده ويحييهم الله جميعاً يوم القيامة. وذلك خلاف ما تقوله النصرارى لأنّها توجب دثور الأجساد دون النفوس.

---

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: حوى. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: القثرونية.

7. The Nicolaitans among them taught that marrying should be given up, and they urged to the good; they venerated Nicholas the associate of the disciples.<sup>12</sup>

8. The Adamites: they go into their churches naked like Adam and Eve and they call their churches paradise; they condemn intercourse.<sup>13</sup>

9. The Cathari: their teachings are those of Nestorius, of which they reject nothing except that they claim that since the coming of Christ one who has committed a sin cannot be forgiven.<sup>14</sup>

10. The 'Spiritualists' do not condemn any part of Nestorius' teaching, except that they claim that if a person dies his soul dies just as his body dies, and God will restore them both to life on the day of resurrection. This is contrary to what the Christians teach, because they lay down that bodies will be destroyed though not souls.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> According to some Christian heresiographers, including Epiphanius, *Panarion* §25, and John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §25, the *Niqālūsiyya*, who were sometimes linked with the deacon Nicolas of Antioch mentioned in Acts 6.5, were known for favouring marriage and sexual licence, the opposite of what is attributed to them here. On the other hand, Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §20, agrees with al-Nāshi', saying that after his ordination Nicolas repudiated his wife and forbade marriage, and others initiated the heresy in his name. Al-Nāshi's reference to them urging to *al-ma'rūf* may possibly be his own gloss derived from the Mu'tazilī principle of *al-amr bi-al-ma'rūf*, 'enjoining the good', though it may equally be an oblique reference to the Gnostic tendencies, 'that which is known' (scil. *ma'rifa*), that were often associated with them.

<sup>13</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* §52 (cf. John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §52), was not certain whether the Adamites, *Ādamiyya*, really existed, though reported on their naked church services from earlier authorities. Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §45, gives a short account very similar to al-Nāshi'.

<sup>14</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* §59, comments on the rigorism of the Cathari, *Qatharūniyya*, towards those who have lapsed. John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §59, adds that they reject those who have married a second time, and they do not accept penance (cf. Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §51). The reference here to their agreement with the Nestorians is one of the indications that al-Nāshi' or his source takes their teachings as the doctrinal norm.

<sup>15</sup> Again, Nestorian teachings are taken as a norm. The name of this sect, *Nafsāniyya*, clearly arises from its preoccupation with the destiny of the soul rather than from any emphasis upon spiritual matters over earthly (it is like the Muslim nickname *Qadariyya*, named from this group's arguments about delimiting God's omnipotence, *qadar*, rather than any defence of it). While debates about the relation between the body and the soul are recorded among Christians, earlier heresiographers do not report a specific sect with this name.

11. وأما الحيّة<sup>1</sup> فيعظمون<sup>2</sup> الحية مع المسيح.

12. وأما الديقطنية فإنهم يقرّون بجميع الكتب التي تقرّ بها النصارى ويجرمون التزويج والنكاح، ولا يأوى عندهم إلاّ الرهبان والأرامل والعذارى. وقالوا: إنّ الأطفال لا يدخلون الجنة لأنّهم لم يعملوا<sup>3</sup> عملاً يستحقّون به ذلك.

13. فأما المصلّانية ففرقة منهم حرّمت<sup>4</sup> التزويج وقالت بقول الجهم في الأفعال، وقد زعمت<sup>5</sup> أنّ آدم، عليه السلام، لما أكل من الشجرة حلّ الشرّ<sup>6</sup> في بطنه وتلك الخطيئة، فالشرّ<sup>7</sup> حالّ في جميع ولده. وليس لأحد استطاعة يفعل بها خيراً ولا شراً فليس الثواب من الله للصالحين بصلاحهم ولكن نعمة من الله عليهم. وزعموا أنّ الشياطين حالة في أبدان الناس وإنّما تذهب عنهم بالصلاة فلذلك سمّتهم النصارى المصلّانية.

وقالت فرقة أخرى من المصلّانية: إنّ ناسوت المسيح ينظر إلى اللاهوت ويعلمه. وأبت أن تقول<sup>8</sup> "إنّ المسيح إله تجسّد"، بل زعمت أنّه إنسان ليس هو الله عزّ وجلّ.

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: الحية. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: يعظمون. <sup>3</sup> ف || ق: يعملون. <sup>4</sup> ف || ق: حرمة. <sup>5</sup> ف || ق: ازعمت. <sup>6</sup> ق: السر || ف: من المحتمل أنّه "الشر". <sup>7</sup> ق: السر. <sup>8</sup> ف || ق: وأنت تقول.



11. The Ophites: they venerate the serpent together with Christ.<sup>16</sup>

12. The Hieracites: they acknowledge all the books which the Christians acknowledge, and they forbid marrying and intercourse; only monks, widows and virgins are received among them. They say: Babies do not enter paradise because they have not performed deeds to merit this.<sup>17</sup>

13. The Mesallians: a group of them forbade marrying, and they taught the same about actions as Jahm.<sup>18</sup> They claimed that when Adam, peace be upon him, ate from the tree, evil, which is sin, inhered within him, and thus evil inheres within all his descendants. No one has the capacity to do good or evil,<sup>19</sup> and so God's reward to the virtuous is not for their virtue but as grace upon them from God. They claimed that devils inhere within the bodies of people and only depart from them through prayer, for which reason the Christians call them 'the insistent prayers'.

Another group of the Mesallians said: The human nature of Christ contemplated the divine nature and knew it. They did not allow it to be said: Christ was God incarnate, but rather they claimed he was human and not God, great and mighty.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* §37, gives graphic descriptions of the cosmology and eucharistic practices of the Ophites, *ḥayyīyya*, in the latter of which a snake is revered together with the consecrated bread; cf. the much briefer accounts of John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §37, and Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §31.

<sup>17</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* §67, John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §67, and Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §60, all list among the beliefs of the Hieracites, *Dīqtāniyya* (according to van Ess, *Häresiographie*, p. 73, this is the result of a mistaken reading of the Syriac *Īr(ā)naqtāyē*), rejection of marriage on the basis of Old and New Testament texts, denial that young children will enter heaven, and excluding from their worship all except virgins, monks, widows and the chaste.

<sup>18</sup> Jahm Ibn Šafwān (d. 128/746; cf. *EI*<sup>2</sup> vol. II, arts. 'Djahm b. Šafwān' and 'Djahmiyya') became a byword among Muslim theologians for his denial of free will. The position of this group is opposed to the position attributed to the majority of Christians in §4.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. §4.

<sup>20</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* §80, mentions two groups of Mesallians, *Muṣalliyyāniyya*, one with pagan and the other with Christian origins, though he does not mention any of the beliefs listed here; cf. the much briefer account in John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §80. The account in Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §74, is quite different.

14. والوالسيّة منهم حرّموا النكاح وأخصّوا كلّ مَنْ طلب الكون معهم، وسكنوا الجبال وتأوّلوا الكتب على خلاف قول الجماعة.

15. ومن المثلثة المملكيّة وهم ثلاثة أصناف. قال الصنف الأوّل كما قالت النسطوريّة في القنومات وخالفتهما في المسيح، فزعمت أنّ الإنسان مذ<sup>1</sup> اتّحد بالكلمة صار منهما<sup>2</sup> قنوم واحد ومسرّتان اثنتان وفعلان اثنان؛<sup>3</sup> فلذلك قالت: المسيح جوهران أزلّي وزمني وقنوم واحد. وقسم هؤلاء الكلام على القتل و الصلب وغير ذلك كما قسمّت الجماعة.

16. ومنهم القولورسيّة أصحاب قولورس؛ زعموا أنّ المقتول المصلوب هو إله عزّ وجلّ بناسوته، وامتنعت من أن تقسم القول عليه وأن تصير واحد القنومين عن صاحبه بعد الاتّحاد<sup>4</sup> لأنّها زعمت أنّ القنومين مركّبان<sup>5</sup> فصار منهما واحد كالنفس والبدن اللذين يصير منهما إنسان.

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: قد. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: منها. <sup>3</sup> ف || ق: مسرتين اثنتين وفعلين اثنتين. <sup>4</sup> ق: الاتحاد. <sup>5</sup> ف || ق: مركباً.

14. The Valesians among them forbade intercourse and castrated all who sought to be with them. They lived in the mountains, and interpreted the books in a manner contrary to the teaching of the community.<sup>21</sup>

15. Among the Trinitarians are the Melkites, and they are three kinds.<sup>22</sup> The first kind taught the same as the Nestorians about the hypostases, but they differed from them over Christ, claiming that as long as the human was united with the Word the outcome from them was one hypostasis, and two volitions and acts. Thus they said: Christ was two substances, eternal and temporal, and one hypostasis.<sup>23</sup> These people separated the discussion about the death and crucifixion and other matters in the same way as the community did.<sup>24</sup>

16. Among them were the Qūlūrusites, the followers of Qūlūrus. They claimed that the one who was killed and crucified was God, great and mighty, in his human nature. They did not allow teaching on it to be separated, or that either of the two hypostases could be parted from its counterpart after the uniting. For they claimed that the two hypostases were put together and from them resulted one, like the soul and body from which results a human being.

---

<sup>21</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* §58, suggests this group, *Wālisiyya*, may have been Arab in origin and refers to their custom of castration, which he attributes to the misguided interpretation of Biblical texts; cf. John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §58, and Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §52, who confirms many of the details given here.

<sup>22</sup> Abū 'Isā (in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 72–73, §14) mentions slight variations of expression over Christology among the Melkites, but says nothing about group divisions.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. §3 above, and also Abū 'Isā in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 72–73, §14.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. §3 above, where 'the community' attribute the different actions of Christ to his divine and human natures.

وزعمت النصارى أنّ هذا الفرقة كانت داعية<sup>1</sup> إلى الاختلاف وهي<sup>2</sup> أقدم من الفرقتين<sup>3</sup> الأولتين.

17. ومنهم الفدية<sup>4</sup> والصلحية زعموا أنّ جوهر معبوديتهم<sup>5</sup> غير أقانيمه فالثلاثة القنومات هي الجوهر فأما الجوهر فغيرها. والنصارى يسمّونهم ثنوية<sup>6</sup> لأنّهم عندهم قد زادوا إلى الجوهر الذي هو ثلاثة قنومات جوهرًا آخر. وزعموا أنّ المسيح لم يأخذ من مريم إنسانًا تامًا وإنّما أخذ نفساً وجسداً فركّب الله الكلمة في قنوم تلك النفس وذلك الجسد فصار هو بهما إنساناً لأنّ الإنسان عندهم ليس هو النفس والجسد فقط. وقالت<sup>7</sup> في القتل والصلب مثل ما قالت القولورية ووافقها في مذاهبها.

---

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: داعيتها. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: متى. <sup>3</sup> ف || ق: القرنين. <sup>4</sup> ق: الفدية\الفرية || ف: الغدية. <sup>5</sup> ق || ف: معبوديته. <sup>6</sup> ف || ق: ثبوته. <sup>7</sup> ف || ق: وقال.

The Christians claimed that this group used to incite disagreement; it is earlier than the two preceding groups.<sup>25</sup>

17. Among them were the Redeemed and the Pious;<sup>26</sup> they claimed that the substance of the nature of the One they worshipped is different from his hypostases, so that the three hypostases are the substance though the substance is different from them.<sup>27</sup>

The Christians call them dualists because, as they see it, they added a second substance to the substance which is the three hypostases.<sup>28</sup> They claimed that Christ did not take from Mary a complete human, but he only took a soul and a body. God put the Word in the hypostasis of this soul and body and through them it became a human, because as they see it the human is not only the soul and body. They taught about the death and crucifixion similarly to what the Qūlūrusites taught, and they agreed with them in their views.

---

<sup>25</sup> Qūlūrus cannot be identified. Van Ess, *Häresiographie*, p. 74 suggests that the form may be a metathetical mistake for Qūrūlus, Cyril, though if this is the case it must have occurred in al-Nāshi's source because he repeats the name in good faith in the next paragraph.

The Christological model of the group and their tendency to sow discord fits in with the beliefs and actions of the fifth century bishop and theologian Cyril of Alexandria, who was known for his championing of the doctrine of one nature in Christ and his vehement opposition to competing teachings, among them the Christology of Nestorius; cf. Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §80. In this sense, he may have been seen by some as a defender of ecclesiastical orthodoxy and hence might be dubbed a defender of the imperial ('Melkite') position, even though the Monophysites later took him as their authority.

The mention of 'the two preceding groups' would appear to be the first group of Melkites and the Valesians.

<sup>26</sup> These names are both mysterious. The first is particularly difficult because of its ambiguous appearance in the MS, where the first letter could be either ف or غ, and the second either د or ج, though more likely the former in both cases.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Abū 'Isā in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 66–67, §§1–2, who distinguishes the Melkites from the Nestorians and Jacobites by their teaching that the divine substance possesses the hypostases, and that while the hypostases are the substance it is distinct from them. He does not report any internal differences among the Melkites on the Trinity.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Abū 'Isā in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 82ff., §§35ff., where he deduces from the Melkite teaching about the substance not being identical with the hypostases (p. 66, §2) that since the hypostases are substance in addition to the substance of the Godhead there must be two substances.

18. ومن النصارى الإسحاقية: زعمت أنّ المسيح إنّما هو قنومان ليس لأنّ قنوم الكلمة حلّ في مريم لكن لأنّ إرادة الكلمة حلّت فيها وإنّما اتّحد قنوم الإنسان بإرادة الكلمة دون الكلمة.

19. وقال اليماني: إنّما اتّحدت المسرة بالإنسان كما قالت الإسحاقية إلاّ أنّه زعم أنّ الكلمة ومسرّتها قنوم واحد، وزعم أنّ مسرة الكلمة هي التي وُلدت أى نور من نور الكلمة حالة في بدن.<sup>1</sup>

20. فأما اليعقوبية: فلا خلاف بينها وبين النسطورية في الثلاثة القنومات والجوهر غير أنّها خالفتها في المسيح، فزعمت أنّ الابن والإنسان تركّبا فصارا جوهرًا واحدًا هو الأزليّ وهو الزمّنى وهو الله عندهم الذى هو الكلمة وهو عيسى، ووافقت الفريقين اللذين ذكرنا من الملكية في الصلب

---

<sup>1</sup>ق || ف: نور (٩).

18. Among the Christians are the Isaacites. They claimed that Christ was two hypostases, not because the hypostasis of the Word inhered within Mary but because the will of the Word dwelt within her; the human hypostasis united with the will of the Word and not the Word.<sup>29</sup>

19. Al-Yamānī said: Only the volition united with the human, as the Isaacites taught, except that he claimed the Word and its volition were one hypostasis. He claimed it was the volition of the Word that was born, in other words light from the light of the Word dwelling in a body.<sup>30</sup>

20. The Jacobites: there is no difference between them and the Nestorians over the three hypostases and the substance,<sup>31</sup> though they differed from them over Christ. They claimed that the Son and the human were put together and became one substance, eternal and temporal, God who, as they saw it, is the Word, and Jesus.<sup>32</sup> They agreed with the two groups of the Melkites we have mentioned over the crucifixion

---

<sup>29</sup> These are presumably the followers of Isaac of Nineveh (fl. late 7th century), who is also known to al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, p. 175. He was mainly remembered in the Nestorian church for his writings on asceticism.

<sup>30</sup> This al-Yamānī cannot be identified although, as van Ess, *Häresiographie*, p. 78, points out, the mention of him by name suggests he was well known to al-Nāshī' or his source. Van Ess further links him with one of the sects listed by al-Qaḥṭabī (in the *Fihrist* it is given as *Thamāniyya*).

Al-Yamānī was evidently more concerned than the Isaacites to involve the Word itself intimately in the uniting of its volition with the human, both in his insistence that the Word and its volition are one hypostasis, and in his use of light imagery to express it, a clear echo of the reference in the Nicene Creed to the relationship between the Father and the Son, 'God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God', reshaped to denote the relationship between the Word and the incarnate volition.

Although the model of the Incarnation favoured by the Isaacites and al-Yamānī is easily understood as a contribution to internal Christian debates about the problems raised by the uniting of divine and human, the Arabic forms of the proponents' names persuade one that this model may reflect attempts within a Muslim milieu to avoid implications of uniting by essence, in which case the distant echo of this imagery in al-Nāshī's younger contemporary Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī's refutation of Christ's divinity (see below pp. 96–99) may derive from the same explanation.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Abū 'Īsā in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 66–67, §§ 1–2. Again, the Nestorians are taken as the orthodox norm.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Abū 'Īsā in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 70–71, § 12, who in more detail says they taught that the divine and human substances became one and the divine and human hypostases became one.

والموت ولم تفصل القول بل صرحت في تقديسها بالقول إنَّ القديس<sup>١</sup> الذي لا يموت هو صُلب بدلنا.

21. وقالت اللوليانَّة وهم الملقَّبون بالأخريغوريَّة كما قالت اليعقوبيَّة في جميع مذاهبها خلا أنَّها زعمت أنَّ لآدم، عليه السلام، جوهرين، جوهرًا<sup>٢</sup> لا يموت ولا يفسد وهو الذي خلقه الله أولاً وجوهرًا ثانيًا<sup>٣</sup> وجب عليه الموت حين عصى الله. وزعمت أنَّ الجوهر الذي أخذه الله من البشر فاتَّحد به هو الجوهر الذي لم يتدنَّس ولم يعص؛ وهذا لا تقوله اليعقوبيَّة. وهؤلاء أهل أرمينية.

22. فأما المارونيَّة فقالت بالتثليث وزعمت أنَّ الابن جرى من بطن مريم كجرى الماء من الميزاب.

---

<sup>١</sup> ف || ق: إن القديس ان. <sup>٢</sup> ف || ق: جوهران جوهر. <sup>٣</sup> ف || ق: جوهر تان.



and death,<sup>33</sup> not making any different statements but rather explaining about the divine in these by saying that the holy One who does not die was crucified in place of us.

21. The Julianists, who are nicknamed the Gregorians, taught the same as the Jacobites in all their doctrines,<sup>34</sup> except that they claimed that Adam, peace be upon him, had two substances, a substance which does not die or decay, the one that God created in the beginning, and a second substance which was necessarily subject to death because it disobeyed God. They claimed that the substance which God took from man to unite with was the substance which was not polluted and did not disobey. The Jacobites do not teach this. These are the inhabitants of Armenia.

22. The Maronites: they taught the Trinity, and claimed that the Son issued from Mary's womb like water issues from a tube.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> These sects will be the Qūlūrusites and the Redeemed, §§16 and 17, who rejected the teaching of 'the community' that Christ's crucifixion and death affected him only in his human nature, §3 above.

<sup>34</sup> Abū 'Isā also refers to the *Lūliyāniyya* (corrected from *Lūlbāniyya*) and *Akhryghūriyya* at the end of his refutation of Christianity, among sects he intends to refute in another (non-extant) work (Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 276–277, §352, also pp. 88–89, §12 and 272–273, §345), though he knows them under the slightly different transliterated names *Aliyāniyya* and *Aghriyāriyya*, and lists them separately as different sects. The supporters of Julian of Halicarnassus (d. after 518) were Monophysites like the Jacobites. Their association with Armenia would naturally lead to them being called supporters of the fourth century 'Apostle of Armenia' Gregory the Illuminator.

According to John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §84, the Julianists held that Christ's body was incorruptible, and that while he experienced human needs such as hunger, thirst and tiredness, he did so in a way different from human suffering; Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §83, reports their belief that Christ's body came from Adam's unfallen nature.

<sup>35</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* §31, John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §31, and Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §24, attribute this teaching about the mode of Jesus' birth to the Valentinians. Abū 'Isā knows this group by the same name *Mārūniyya* (Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 88–89, §12, and 276–277, §352). They held a Monothelite Christology, which stated that there was only one will in Christ, and thus may loosely be grouped with the Jacobites, since this doctrine sprang from an attempt to reconcile the Monophysites to the declarations of the church Councils.

23. وأما الأفولنارسطية<sup>1</sup> فقالت في القنومات بقول النسطورية، ولكن زعمت أنّ القنومات تتفاضل<sup>2</sup> كتفاضل الكواكب وإن كانت من جوهر واحد. وزعمت أنّ الأب لا يتكلم عليه ولا تُدرك صفته، فأما الابن والروح فيُتكلم عليهما. وزعمت أنّ الابن أخذ من مريم العذراء<sup>3</sup> جسداً ونفساً ولم يأخذ منها ذهنًا، لأنّ الإنسان عندهم من ثلاثة أجزاء: من جسد ونفس وذهن. وزعمت أنّ اللاهوت امتزج بالناسوت فصار معبودهم متأنساً<sup>4</sup>. وذكرت أنّ في الجنة طعاماً وشراباً ونكاحاً وأنّ السبت يحفظ فيها ويذبح فيها الذبائح.

24. وأما الأوطاخية أصحاب أوطاخي، فقالت: ثلاثة قنومات جوهرًا واحدًا، وزعمت أنّ المسيح هو الجوهر المتأنس غير أنّ جسده ليس من جوهر الإنسان وإنما أتى به معه من السماء. ولم تخالف اليعقوبية في شيء غير هذه اللفظة.

25. الوالينطية قالت في جسد المسيح خاصةً مثل الأوطاخية أنّه نزل به من السماء، وقالت: إنه غير مخلوق.

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: الأفولنارسطية. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: تفاضل. <sup>3</sup> ف || ق: العذرى. <sup>4</sup> ف || ق: مناسبا. <sup>5</sup> ف || ق: هذا.

23. The Apollinarians: they taught the Nestorian teaching about the hypostases,<sup>36</sup> though they claimed that the hypostases differ in status like the stars do, yet they are from one substance. They claimed that there can be no discussion about the Father and that his characteristic cannot be perceived, while there can be discussion about the Son and the Spirit. They claimed that the Son took from the Virgin Mary a body and soul but did not take an intellect from her, for as they saw it the human is of three parts, body, soul and intellect.<sup>37</sup> They claimed that the divine nature mixed with the human nature and the One they worshipped became human.<sup>38</sup> They stated that in paradise there is eating, drinking and intercourse, and that the Sabbath is kept there and sacrifices are made there.

24. The Eutychians were the followers of Eutyches.<sup>39</sup> They taught: three hypostases, one substance. They claimed that Christ was the substance become human, except that his body was not from the substance of a human but rather that he brought it with him from heaven.<sup>40</sup> They did not diverge from the Jacobites in anything except these statements.

25. The Valentinians held a particular teaching about Christ's body like that of the Eutychians, that he descended with it from heaven. They said: It was not created.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Once again, the Nestorians are taken as the norm. Abū 'Īsā lists this group, here named *Afūlnāristīyya*, as Followers of Apollinaris, *aṣḥāb Bulnāris* (Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 276–277, §352).

<sup>37</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* §77 (cf. John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §77; Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §71), bitterly criticises the Apollinarian teaching that Christ 'took flesh and soul when he came, but did not take a mind, that is not a complete human nature'.

<sup>38</sup> This mention of the mixing of the two natures relates this group to the Monophysite Jacobites, as the listing suggests, although Apollinaris himself (d. c. 390) antedated the controversies that led to the use of such labels.

<sup>39</sup> Abū 'Īsā also refers to this group, which is here called *Awṭākhīyya aṣḥāb Awṭākhī*, as *aṣḥāb Awṭākhī* (Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 276–277, §352, also pp. 272–273, §345).

<sup>40</sup> John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §82 (cf. Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §81), similarly reports their belief that Christ did not take flesh from the Virgin Mary, but became incarnate 'in a more divine manner'.

<sup>41</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* §31, John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §31, and Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §24, relate precisely this teaching.

26. وأما الموحدة فمنها سبع<sup>1</sup> فرق. منها الأريوسية أصحاب أريوس، قالت بالتوحيد ونفي التثليث والقنومات وزعمت أن المسيح وروح القدس عبدان مخلوقان، إلا أن الله، جل ثناؤه، أقدرهما على خلق العالم وتديره فهما خالقه<sup>2</sup> ومدبراه والمرسلان الرسل.

27. قال عبدالله: فأما مثلثو النصارى فعلى ضربين: قوم يجادلون بالمقاييس<sup>3</sup> العقلية، وقوم يذهبون إلى ظاهر الإنجيل<sup>4</sup> وإلى التقليد لأسلافهم.<sup>5</sup> فأما من ذهب إلى ظاهر الإنجيل فإنما تعلق بقول يحكى في الإنجيل عن المسيح أنه قال: "أندروا<sup>6</sup> الناس باسم الأب والابن وروح القدس"، ليس فيه بيان أنها قديمة ولا محدثة ولا أنها جوهر واحد ولا غير ذلك ولا في الإنجيل لفظة تدل على جوهر ولا قنومات، وهذا لفظة فلسفية يونانية سقطت إلى القوم فتكلموا بها. وليس يتهياً<sup>7</sup> لمن ذهب إلى لفظ الإنجيل<sup>8</sup> أن يقيم فيه برهاناً أن عيسى ابن الله دون غيره لأن عيسى قد ذكر في الإنجيل أنه قال: "إني

---

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: سبعة. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: خالقاً. <sup>3</sup> ف || ق: بالمقاييس. <sup>4</sup> ف || ق: إلى ظاهر الإنجيل فإنما تعلق بقول وإلى التقليد. <sup>5</sup> ف || ق: لا يتلافهم. <sup>6</sup> ف || ق: لتدرا. <sup>7</sup> ف، من رد ابن العسال || ق: تبهتاً. <sup>8</sup> ف، من رد ابن العسال || ق: إلى اللفظ لفظ الإنجيل.

26. The Unitarians: there are seven groups of them.<sup>42</sup> Among them were the Arians, the followers of Arius. They taught about divine unity and denial of the Trinity and hypostases, claiming that Christ and the Holy Spirit are two created servants, except that God, great is his praise, empowered them to create and oversee the world. So it is they who were its creators and overseers, and the ones who sent the prophets.<sup>43</sup>

27. 'Abdallāh said: The Christian Trinitarians are of two sorts, people who argue according to rational criteria, and people who take refuge in the literal meaning of the Gospel and in imitation of their predecessors.

As for those who take refuge in the literal meaning of the Gospel, they hold only to the teachings narrated in the Gospel from Christ, who said: 'Consecrate people in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit'.<sup>44</sup> Here there is no clear indication that they are eternal or temporal or that they are one substance or otherwise, nor in the Gospel is there any utterance which suggests substance or hypostases. Such utterances are philosophical, Greek; they passed down to the people, and they employed them in their discussions.

Nor can any of those who take refuge in the words of the Gospel possibly establish on it a proof that Jesus and no others was Son of God.<sup>45</sup> For Jesus is recorded in the Gospel as saying, 'I am going to

<sup>42</sup> Only the Arians remain, possibly the result of Ibn al-'Assāl's editing.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion* §69, John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus* §69, and Theodore bar Kōnī, *Scholion* XI §62. Abū 'Isā is likewise aware that the Arians make the Son a creature (Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 194–195 §241), though he nevertheless plans to refute them, pp. 276–277 §352. Cf. also 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, below pp. 238–239, §9, who gives a more detailed, and probably more accurate, account than is provided in this extract.

Although this group with its monotheistic teaching might be thought in principle to appeal to al-Nāshi', he signals his disapproval in his final comment that according to their teaching the prophets could not have been sent by God himself but by deputies.

<sup>44</sup> Matthew 28.19. This could be the earliest appearance of this verse in Arabic translation (Accad, 'The Gospels in Muslim Discourse of the ninth to the fourteenth centuries: an exegetical inventorial table' (part 2), *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 14, 2003, (pp. 205–220) p. 220). In the next century, al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, pp. 196–197, §44 below, and al-Ḥasan Ibn Ayyūb, *Radd* (in Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ*, Cairo, 1905, vol. II, p. 353.9) both have the more familiar 'ammidū al-nās.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. the early third/ninth century Christian convert to Islam 'Alī al-Ṭabarī, *Radd*, p. 138. 17–20, who argues that in the New Testament there is only a handful of ambiguous references to the divinity of Jesus but as many as twenty thousand references to his humanity.

ذاهب<sup>1</sup> إلى أبي وأبيكم وربّي وربكم، وأشرك بينه وبينهم في الأمرين جميعاً، وفي التوراة تسمية ”إسرائيل ابناً بكرًا“، فهذا ما لا سبيل<sup>2</sup> إلى إقامة البرهان<sup>3</sup> فيه<sup>4</sup> على ظاهره لاحتماله الوجوه. وليس يمكنهم أن يدّعوا أن عيسى ابن الله من قبل توقيف النبي إياهم<sup>5</sup> على ذلك إذ ليس عندهم أكثر من لفظ الإنجيل للذي ينازعونه<sup>6</sup> فيمكن من قلّد أن يدعى إطباق أهل الملّة على ذلك، ولا مع أحد من القوم برهان<sup>7</sup> من كتاب ولا توقيف على أيّ جهة هو ابن الله، أعلى اتّحاده به بالجوهريّة أم بالقنوميّة<sup>8</sup> أم بالمسرّة أم بغير ذلك، وذلك أبعد من أن يدّعوا في ذلك توقيفاً.

---

<sup>1</sup>ق || ف: أذهب. <sup>2</sup>ف || ق: ما لا؟ بيل. <sup>3</sup>ف || ق: البرهن. <sup>4</sup>ف || ق: منه. <sup>5</sup>ف || ق: إياهم. <sup>6</sup>ف || ق: الذي ينازعوه. <sup>7</sup>ف، من ردّ ابن العسال || ق: لان. <sup>8</sup>ف || ق: بالمقنومية.

my Father and your Father, to my Lord and your Lord',<sup>46</sup> associating himself jointly with them in both instances; and in the Torah Israel is named 'first-born son'.<sup>47</sup> So this does not allow the possibility of establishing a proof on it according to its literal meaning because of its probable senses.

They cannot claim that Jesus is Son of God arising from what the prophet informed them about this, because they have nothing more than the utterances of the Gospel to use in contention—those who favour imitation might have been able to command the concurrence of the followers of religion on this.<sup>48</sup> And no single one of the people has a proof from a book or information about any detail that he is God's son, either that he united with him substantially, hypostatically, by volition or in any other way. This is too extreme for them to claim any information about it.

---

<sup>46</sup> John 20.17. This was probably the single most popular anti-Christian proof text among Muslim polemicists (cf. M. Accad, 'The Ultimate Proof-Text: The Interpretation of John 20. 17 in Muslim-Christian Dialogue (second/eighth—eighth/fourteenth centuries)', in D. Thomas, ed., *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule, Church Life and Scholarship in 'Abbasid Iraq*, Leiden, 2003, (pp. 199–214) pp. 207–213, and 'The Gospels in Muslim Discourse of the ninth to the fourteenth centuries: an exegetical inventorial table' (part 4), *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 14, 2003, (pp. 459–479) p. 478).

<sup>47</sup> Exodus 4.22. Both al-Jāhiz, *Radd*, p. 26, before al-Nāshi', and 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, vol. V, p. 110.6–11, after him refer to this verse in a similar argument. Cf. also S. Pines, "'Israel, my Firstborn" and the Sonship of Jesus', in E.E. Urbach, R.J. Zwi Werblowsky and C. Wirzubski, eds, *Studies in Mysticism and Religion presented to Gershom G. Scholem*, Jerusalem, 1967, (pp. 177–190), for a wider consideration of the use of the verse. Al-Nāshi' appears to regard these Biblical references as too familiar an argument against the unique divine Sonship of Jesus to require more than a passing mention.

<sup>48</sup> It is tempting to see the mention of 'the prophet' here as a reference to the Prophet Muḥammad's transmission of such teachings as in Q 4.171, 'The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of God and his word which he conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from him', that parallel Christian beliefs about Jesus, or as a reference to Ḥadīths, as van Ess, *Häresiographie*, p. 85 takes it, in which case *Ahl al-milla* must be the Muslim community. But it is surprising to find a Muslim speaking of the Prophet in this bald way without identifying him by an honorific, and there would surely not be any prophetic sayings that might confirm the divine sonship of Jesus. The alternative is that it is a general (and clumsy) reference to the Old Testament prophets, who would traditionally be adduced by Christians as foretelling the coming of Christ, in which case *Ahl al-milla* must be a reference to people of faith other than Christians; cf. §4 above.

The gist of the awkward sentence appears to be that if they did not restrict themselves to their own scriptures as a source of evidence—and al-Nāshi' shows a clear though, in Muslim terms, understandable misconception in assuming they will only use the Gospel and no other Biblical book—then they could have looked for support in prophetic books or among the beliefs of other religious communities.

28. فإن صرنا إلى حجة<sup>1</sup> العقل لم نجد لقولهم أن الإنسان صار أزلّياً والأزلى صار إنساناً وجهاً البتة لأنهما إن كانا ثابتين<sup>2</sup> على ذاتهما غير مستحيلين فليس يصير هذا هو هذا بجهة من الجهات، وإن لم يكونا ثابتين على ذاتهما<sup>3</sup> فقد استحالا، وفاسد في العقل أن يستحيل الباري الأزلى فيصير محدثاً لم يكن فكان ويستحيل المحدث الزمنى فيصير أزلّياً لم يحدث. ومن جهل القوم أنهم لم يرضوا يقولون "خالط الباري المحدث" أو "مازجه" أو "لصق به" أو "نزل<sup>4</sup> معه" حتى قالوا "اتحد به فصار هو هو"، والباري عندهم لا يجوز على ذاته مازجة الأجرام ولا مماسة الأجسام ولا مخالطة الأشياء التي يجوز عليها الخلط فهو عن أن يتحد بشيء يكون هو إياه أبعد.

29. والذين زعموا أن الباري -جلّ عما قالوا- مات وصلب ودُفن إن لم يدلّوا بهذا القول على أن الباري قد ناله من ذلك ما ينال من فعل به مثل ذلك فلا وجه لإطلاق القول، وإن دلّوا على ذلك فغير مشكوك في أن من مات فقد بطل ودثر والأزلى لا يجوز عليه ذلك.

30. ومن استثنى منهم القول فقال "بجهة ناسوته"، فلا بدّ له أن يكون أفاد بهذا القول أن الباري نفسه قد مات بجهة من الجهات، فما يبالي أكانت<sup>5</sup> تلك الجهة جهة ناسوته أو غير جهة ناسوته إذ كان هو نفسه الذي مات. وقد

<sup>1</sup> ف، من ردّ ابن العسال || ق: جهة. <sup>2</sup> ف، من ردّ ابن العسال || ق: باثنتين. <sup>3</sup> ف، من ردّ ابن العسال || ق: قراتهما. <sup>4</sup> ف || ق: نزلة. <sup>5</sup> ف || ق: أكادب.



28. If we come to rational argument, we do not find any sense at all in their teaching that the human became eternal and the eternal became human,<sup>49</sup> for if the two were stable in their essences and unchangeable, then this could not become that in any respect. And if they were not stable in their essences they could have changed, though it is rationally fallacious for the eternal Creator to change and become temporal, not existing and then existing, and for the temporal that is subject to time to change and become eternal, never being temporal. The ignorance of the people is shown by the fact that they refuse to say, 'The Creator mingled with the temporal', or 'He mixed with it', or 'He came into contact with it', or 'He sent him down with it',<sup>50</sup> although they say 'He united with it and he became it'.<sup>51</sup> As they see it, the essence of the Creator is not susceptible to mixing with concrete bodies, touching physical bodies or mingling with things that are susceptible to mingling, although he is even more remote from uniting with a thing.

29. If those who claim that the Creator—mightier than they say—died, was crucified and was buried cannot prove by this teaching that the Creator was affected by what affected the one to whom this sort of thing was done, there is no reason to take the teaching definitively. And if they can prove this, then it is beyond doubt that one who has died has become nothing and is obliterated, and this is not possible for the eternal One.

30. The one among them who makes a special case and says 'in the aspect of his human nature', cannot avoid declaring by this teaching that the Creator himself must have died in one or other aspect.<sup>52</sup> It is of no consequence to me whether this aspect was that of his human nature or not his human nature, for he himself was the one who died.

---

<sup>49</sup> This oversimplification, which contrasts starkly with the more nuanced Christological descriptions given above in §§ 2 and 3, makes an easy target for refutation.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. § 2 above.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā in Thomas, *Incarnation*, § 10, pp. 86–89, who records the term *ittahada* and its cognates as a conventional Christian usage, and gives one interpretation as 'that one resulted from two'. But he does not state as directly as al-Nāshi' that its obvious meaning is that the one became the other.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. § 3 above, where the Christians include death among the experiences that affected Christ's human nature alone.

نعلم أنّ جميع ما يموت فليس يموت من كلّ جهة لأنّه ليس يموت بأن يذهب لونه ولا بأن يتنقض<sup>1</sup> جسمه: من وجوه كثيرة لا يموت وإنّما يموت من الجهة التي<sup>2</sup> يفقد منها. فليس لاستثناء الجهات في الشئ إذا مات وجهه إذ كان ذلك ليس بمزيل<sup>3</sup> عنه أن يكون قد مات. أو لا يكون القول إنّ البارئ قد مات مفيداً أنّه مات بل غيره، فليس لذكره في الموت وجه. ولا شئ أبين من هذا.

31. والذين قالوا إنّ المسيح جوهران وقنومان ليقسموا كلامهم فيقولون "مات من جهة ناسوته ولم يمت<sup>4</sup> من جهة لاهوته"، لا يخرجون بما فعلوه ممّا يلزم أصحابهم لأنّه إذا كان المسيح هو البارئ والعبد جميعاً فسواء كانا جوهرين أو تركباً جوهرًا واحدًا إذا قيل إنّ المسيح قد مات لأنّ ذلك يوجب أنّهما جميعاً اللذان لحقهما الموت إن شاء<sup>5</sup> كانا واحدًا وإن شاء<sup>6</sup> كانا اثنين.

32. والذي ادّعته النصارى من أنّ ثلاثة قنومات أحدها علّة لصاحبه<sup>7</sup> وهما معلولان له وكلّهما لم تزل كالذي ادّعته دهرية الفلاسفة من أنّ البارئ علّة

---

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: يتنقض. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: الدى. <sup>3</sup> ف || ق: عزيل. <sup>4</sup> ف || ق: يموت. <sup>5</sup> ف || ق: شا. <sup>6</sup> ف || ق: شا. <sup>7</sup> ف || ق: لصاحبه.

Now we know that all those who die do not die in every aspect because they do not die in the sense of their colour vanishing or their body fading away: in many respects they do not die, but only die according to the aspect of which they are deprived.<sup>53</sup> So no special case can be made for the aspects of a thing if it dies, for that it has died cannot be uncoupled from it. The alternative is that the teaching that the Creator died does not state that he died but another than him, so there is no content to what is said about him concerning death.<sup>54</sup> Nothing can be clearer than this.

31. Those who say that Christ was two substances and hypostases in order to separate their arguments and say, 'He died in his human aspect but did not die in his divine aspect', cannot escape by what they do from what bears upon their companions.<sup>55</sup> For if Christ was both Creator and human, then it is the same whether they were two substances or composed as one substance when it is said that Christ died, for this necessitates both of them being affected by death whether they were supposed to be one or two.<sup>56</sup>

32. This claim of the Christians, that of the three hypostases one is cause to its two companions and they are its effects and that they are all eternal,<sup>57</sup> is like the claim of the fatalists among the philosophers that the Creator is the cause of the universe and the universe is his effect

---

<sup>53</sup> Cf. §10 above, where the 'Spiritualists' are distinguished by their belief that death affects the soul as well as the body. Al-Nāshi' points out there that this is contrary to general Christian teachings, which are that only the body dies.

<sup>54</sup> This loosely worded argument appears to contend that if Christ's divine nature did not die when his human nature did, then a being other than Christ died because he was both human and divine. If this is what al-Nāshi' actually means, his argument recalls one of Abū 'Īsā's more elaborate attacks directed primarily against the Nestorians (Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 116–119, §§176–178).

<sup>55</sup> There is no clear doctrinal distinction between the previous group and this, though the Christology of this group is identifiably Nestorian; cf. §3 above. Al-Nāshi' appears to assume that the two natures Christology is an apologetic device expressly intended to safeguard Christ's divine nature from being implicated in his human experiences.

<sup>56</sup> This repeats the substance of the argument in §46 above that since it was Christ who died then both his human and divine natures must have been involved.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. §1 above, and also Abū 'Īsā in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 66–67, §6, who says in more detail that the Son is eternally generated from the Father and the Spirit eternally pours forth from the Father.

للعالم والعالم معلول له وأنّهما لم يسبقا بالذاتين، وذلك بين الاستحالة جدًّا<sup>1</sup> من قبل أنّ الأشياء إنّما تتميز<sup>2</sup> في الفعل حتّى يكون للواحد منها ما ليس للآخر إذا وجدها العقل مختلفةً في أنفسها أو وجد للواحد منها ما خالف بينه وبين الآخر. فأما إذا وجدها متّفقة<sup>3</sup> لا تختلف بأنفسها وليس فيها أمور تختلف بها وليس منها شيء يقدم صاحبه بذات ولا طبيعة ولا مرتبة ولا كثرة ولا زمان فليست له سبيل إلى أن يزعم أنّ واحداً<sup>4</sup> منهما علّة والآخر معلول، ولا شيء أبين ممّا قلنا.

ألا ترى أنّ القوم قالوا: "ثلاثة قنومات متّفقات، متّفقة في الجوهر لا اختلاف بينها<sup>5</sup>، متّفقة في القدم لا يتقدّم شيء منها شيئاً، وليس فيها خلاف في أنفسها ولا في شيء منها يخالف<sup>6</sup> به صاحبه".<sup>7</sup> ثمّ ادّعوا أنّ هذا أب ليس بابن ولا روح وهذا روح ليس بأب<sup>8</sup> ولا ابن وهذا ابن ليس بأب ولا روح وأنّ هذا علّة هذين ليس بمعلول وهذا معلولان<sup>9</sup> ليسا بعلّة ولا هي مختلفة بأنفسها فيصحّ أنّ كلّ واحد منها ليس هو كالآخر ولا هي مختلفة بأمر فيصحّ ذلك أيضاً. فلا شيء أبين من فساد قولهم<sup>10</sup> في ذلك.

33. وقد جهل قوم منهم فلعجؤوا إلى أن قالوا: إنّ الأعراض كذلك،<sup>11</sup> وذلك أنّ البياض والسواد قد يتّفقان بأنّهما لوانان ويختلفان<sup>12</sup> بأنّهما سواد وبياض

<sup>1</sup> ف، ق: حدًّا. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: تتميز. <sup>3</sup> ف || ق: منفعة. <sup>4</sup> ف || ق: واحد. <sup>5</sup> ف || ق: بينها. <sup>6</sup> ف || ق: ما يخالف. <sup>7</sup> من ردّ ابن العسال || ق: صاحبه. <sup>8</sup> ف || ق: باب. <sup>9</sup> هذين معلولين؛ ف: هذين معلولان. <sup>10</sup> ف، من ردّ ابن العسال || ق: فساده لهم. <sup>11</sup> ف || ق: لذلك. <sup>12</sup> ف || ق: يختلفان.

although neither is prior in essence.<sup>58</sup> This is the most patent impossibility, because in practice things are surely marked out so that one possesses what another does not, and hence reason finds that they are distinguished by themselves or that one possesses what differentiates it from another. However, if it finds that they are uniform and not distinguished by themselves, and there are no items within them to distinguish them, nor any one among them that precedes its companions in essence, nature, degree, quantity or time, then it has no way of claiming that one of the two is cause and the other is effect.<sup>59</sup> Nothing is clearer than what we have said.

You must have noticed that the people say, 'Three uniform hypostases, uniform in the substance with no distinction between them, uniform in eternity with no one of them preceding another, no difference in themselves nor in any feature they possess by which it differs from its two companions'. Then they claim that the so-called Father is not Son or Spirit, and the so-called Spirit is not Father or Son, and the so-called Son is not Father or Spirit, and that the so-called cause of these other two is not an effect and the two so-called effects are not a cause, though they are not distinguished by themselves. So it is true that each of them is not like the other, but that they are not distinguished by any features within them is also true. There is nothing more patent than the fallacy of what they teach on this.

33. People among them are so ignorant that they go as far as to say: Accidents are like this, which is to say that white and black are uniform in the two of them being colours but are distinguished in the two of them being black and white, and there is nothing between

---

<sup>58</sup> The philosophers' claim that the universe is an eternal emanation from God, and hence contingent upon him but not posterior in time to him, became one of the most celebrated points of dispute between them and theologians in Islam, reaching its climax in al-Ghazālī's refutation of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā's doctrines on this in his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (cf. M.E. Marmura, *Al-Ghazālī, the Incoherence of the Philosophers*, Provo UT, 2000, pp. 12–46). Of course, the Christians differ from the philosophers in that the latter would not say that the universe is identical in essence with God.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Nāshī' summarises the typical theological argument that since causes and effects must be differentiated from one another materially or temporally, it is illogical to assert that entities that are identical in all ways can be causes and effects of one another. In the following paragraph he goes on to apply this to the Trinity.

وليس بينهما شئ يخالف بينهما. والذي ظنّوه فاسد من وجوه كثيرة. أحدها<sup>1</sup> أنّ الأمر لو كان كما قالوا وهم يعتقدون أنّ الجواهر<sup>2</sup> إن لم تخالف<sup>3</sup> الأعراض بينهما لم تختلف وكانت واحداً وأنّ الأعراض قد تختلف بأنفسها لكان هذا واجباً عليهم بعد، وذلك أنّه يُقال لهم: هب الأمر كذلك، أفليست الأعراض مخالفة الجواهر في هذا الباب؟ فنحن نلزمكم أنّ الثلاثة القنومات إذا كانت جوهراً واحداً وكانت مختلفة، وكان الجواهر الآخر لا يختلف إلاّ بالأعراض وأشياء تخالف من أقسامه، أن يكون فيه أشياء غيره، أو أنّ<sup>4</sup> الأعراض ليست كذلك.

---

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: أحدهما. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: الجواهر. <sup>3</sup> ف || ق: يخالف. <sup>4</sup> ف || ق: وان.

them that differentiates them.<sup>60</sup> What they suppose is fallacious for many reasons.

One is that if the situation were as they say, with them believing that if accidents did not differentiate between them substances would not be distinguished and would be one, and that accidents are distinguished by themselves,<sup>61</sup> then they would be forced to accept the following, namely that one could say to them: Granted the situation is thus, are not accidents differentiated from substances in this matter? So we can compel you to acknowledge that if the three hypostases are one substance and are distinguished, and the other substance<sup>62</sup> is only distinguished by accidents and things that are different from its parts, then there are things other than it within it, or that accidents are not like this.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Like Christian scholars known from the beginning of the third/ninth century, and also others cited by al-Bāqillānī in the fourth/tenth century (*Tamhūd*, below pp. 164–167, §17), some unidentified Arab-speaking Christians borrow from Muslim theology in order to explain and defend their doctrine. According to *kalām* understanding, created reality comprised substances, *jawāhir*, which were material clusters of atoms uncharacterised in themselves, and accidents, *a'rad*, which conferred qualities upon substances by inhering within them. The Christians here make use of the idea that two accidents can simultaneously be identical as accidents, and also be distinguished as accidents of the qualities black and white. In this respect accidents appear to resemble the divine hypostases, which simultaneously are identical as divine substance and are distinguished as three Persons.

It would be of great interest to know who these Christians were, and whether they made wider use of *kalām* concepts. Contrary to what van Ess, *Häresiographie*, p. 86, says, they do not introduce the concept of substance in this argument, maybe realising the potential confusion between the material *jawhar*, the basic unit of tangible experience in Muslim *kalām* accounts of created reality, and the ultimately Aristotelian notion of *jawhar*, a self-subsisting entity, which was integral to their own accounts of the Trinitarian Godhead. Al-Bāqillānī introduces his refutation of Christianity with exactly such an argument against what he sees as the ambiguous use of the term *jawhar* (*Tamhūd*, below pp. 144–153, §§1–7), while al-Nāshi' himself closes his examination of Christianity with it, §35. As it is, these Christians open the way for al-Nāshi' to compare the hypostases with accidents and expose the inadequacy of the Christian attempt to frame their doctrine on an Islamic model.

<sup>61</sup> Al-Nāshi's point is that if what the Christians say is correct then since accidents would be all the same in that they are accidents (though different as accidents of different qualities), then they could not confer differentiating qualities upon substances, which would themselves be all the same.

<sup>62</sup> I.e. the material substance that according to *kalām* thinking constitutes contingent reality, as opposed to the divine substance of Trinitarian doctrine.

<sup>63</sup> By a simple comparison, if material substances are differentiated from one another by accidents, then the divine substance must be also differentiated into distinct hypostases by entities additional to it, making the Trinity a multiplicity.

والوجه الآخر: يلزمكم منها جميعاً أنّ الجواهر إذا اختلفت واتّفتت فلا بدّ من<sup>1</sup> أن تكون متّفقة بأنفسها مختلفة بأنفسها أو متّفقة<sup>2</sup> بأنفسها مختلفة بسواها أو مختلفة بأنفسها متّفقة بسواها وكذلك الأعراض، لتفسد<sup>3</sup> ما أصّلتكم. والوجه الآخر أنّ الذي ادّعوه من اتّفاق اللونين السواد والبياض ليس هو اتّفاقاً<sup>4</sup> في أنفسهما ولا في صورَ فيهما وإنّما قيل "اتّفقا بأنّهما لونان" يُراد أنّ<sup>5</sup> البصر أدركهما فهاهنا شيء بعدد قد جمعها كما يقال "محسوسان" يُراد أنّ<sup>6</sup> حسّاً يقع عليهما، و"معلومان" يُراد أنّ علماً يلحقهما، فلعمري ما وفّق بينهما إلّا<sup>7</sup> المعنى وإن<sup>8</sup> لم يكن ذلك المعنى في ذاتها.<sup>9</sup> وكذلك يجب إذا كانت القنومات مختلفة،<sup>10</sup> لا تتّفق إلّا لشيء آخر وفّق بينهما<sup>11</sup> إذ هي مختلفة في أنفسها أو تكون متّفقة في أنفسها فلا تختلف إلّا بشيء خالف شيئاً بينهما<sup>12</sup> كما أنّ البياض والسواد لما كانا مختلفين<sup>13</sup> بأنفسهما كان لا بدّ، إذا اتّفقا، من شيء وفّق بينهما إن شاء حملاً فكان صفةً لهما وإن شاء كان جامعاً لهما من خارج كما قيل "محسوسان" من أجل حسّ<sup>14</sup> غيرهما و"معلومان" من أجل علم غيرهما.

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: فلا تدمن. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: ومتّفقة. <sup>3</sup> ق، ف (نص) || ف (هامش): لعلّه "يفسد" أو شيء مثله. <sup>4</sup> ف || ق: اتّفاق. <sup>5</sup> ف || ق: يسرادان. <sup>6</sup> ف || ق: يسرادان. <sup>7</sup> ف || ق: إلى. <sup>8</sup> ف، ق: فإن. <sup>9</sup> ق || ف: في ذاتها (لم يتّفقا). <sup>10</sup> ق || ف: مختلفة (أنّها) لا تتّفق. <sup>11</sup> ق، ف (نص) || ف: لعلّه "بينها". <sup>12</sup> ق، ف (نص) || ف: لعلّه "بينها". <sup>13</sup> ف || ق: مختلفتين. <sup>14</sup> ف || ق: حتى.



Another point: If substances are distinguished and uniform, then from both these together you are forced to accept that there is no alternative to them being uniform by themselves and distinguished by themselves, or uniform by themselves and distinguished by something other than them, or distinguished by themselves and uniform by something other than them, and the same for accidents, so that what you base yourselves on is vain.<sup>64</sup>

Another point is that what they claim about the uniformity of the two colours black and white is not uniformity in themselves nor by any forms within them, but simply by the words 'They are uniform as two colours', meaning that sight reaches them. So there is a further thing here that joins them together, just as is said 'They are both perceptible', meaning that sense perceives them, or 'They are both known', meaning that knowledge attains them. Goodness me, they are only made consistent by something, even though this something is not in their essences. In the same way, if the hypostases are distinguished, it must follow that they can only be made uniform by an additional thing that makes them consistent since they are distinguished in themselves, or they are uniform in themselves and can only be distinguished by something which is different from anything they have between the two of them. This is just like white and black: since they are distinguished in themselves, then if they are uniform it can only be by a thing that makes them consistent, whether integral and so an attribute they both have, or something that joins them from outside—as has been said 'They are both perceptible' because of a sense other than them, and 'They are both known' because of some knowledge other than them.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> In this unelaborated argument al-Nāshi' appears to be saying that if contingent substances and accidents are both distinct and uniform, as the Christians contend, then either their opposed characteristics arise from them themselves, which is *prima facie* illogical because it entails substances and accidents being contradictory within themselves, or one or other of their characteristics arises from a cause external to the entity, which when related to the Christian doctrine imports an additional presence into the Trinity.

<sup>65</sup> This is a repetition of the point made in the two preceding arguments, that any way of making different entities uniform must be due to a cause—in this case a statement about them—that is external to them. So, however the divine hypostases are made distinct or uniform, there must be an additional entity within the Godhead, which contradicts the doctrine.

34. قال عبدالله: أمّا أنا فلا أعلم كلاماً ألزم من هذا. فأما الذين فضّلوا<sup>2</sup> بينهما في أنفسهما فالكلام لهم لازم أيضاً أنّها إذا اتّفقت في الجوهر فليس يكون منها ما هو أفضل إلاّ بمعنىّ إذ ليس ما فضّل بذاته فيكون مخالفاً لما فضّله بذاته، فإنّما هو إذاً أفضل بمعنىّ فيه، وذلك يوجب أنّ فيهما سواهما.

35. وقد ذهب قوم من محدّثهم إلى أن قالوا: قد دلّ العالم على أنّ له صانعاً ودلّ على أنّ الذي صنعه عالم حيّ، فأثبتنا له حياةً وعلماً قياساً على أنّا لم نشاهد فعّالاً حكيماً إلاّ وهو عالم حيّ، فانتقض قولهم وما أصلوا على هذا الاستدلال من وجوه كثيرة.

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: كلام. <sup>2</sup> ق: فصلوا؛ ف: فاضلوا.

34. 'Abdallāh said: I confess that I do not know any argument more compelling than this. As for those who give preference to one of them over the other, the argument applies to them as well.<sup>66</sup> If they are uniform in the substance, then none of them can be superior except through something, since there is none that is superior by its essence and so can be different from what it is superior to by its essence, and so it can only be superior through something in it, necessitating the existence of something other than the two of them in them.<sup>67</sup>

35. Contemporaries<sup>68</sup> have got to the point where they say: The universe gives evidence of having a Maker, and gives evidence that the One who made it is knowing and living. So we confirm that he has life and knowledge by analogy with the fact that we have never been aware of one who acts in a wise manner who is not knowing and living. Their teaching and what they base on this inference can be attacked in many ways.

---

<sup>66</sup> This could be a reference to the Arians who, as al-Nāshi' says in §26, subordinate the Son and Holy Spirit to the Father, though it applies equally to the Apollinarians, §23.

<sup>67</sup> Al-Nāshi' applies the same argument as above, that if the hypostases are one substance they cannot differ except through some external cause, resulting in a multiplicity in the Godhead.

<sup>68</sup> The authors of this argument from design are distinguished from the 'community' of Christians with whom al-Nāshi' has been in contention so far, suggesting that whereas he discovered the teachings of the latter indirectly, presumably through written sources, he had direct access to the opinions of the former. His contemporary Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī also records the same argument, showing how well-known it was at this time; quoted in 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, pp. 226–227, §1 below.

Although their presentation is brief, it is clear that these Christians make use of the Islamic attributes doctrine that had been developed over the century leading up to al-Nāshi's time, according to which a quality within a being indicated an attribute within that being as its source. Thus, if a being was living it must have the attribute of life. Among the first Christians known to have employed this logic in order to explain the Trinity was the early third/ninth century Nestorian 'Ammār al-Baṣrī (cf. Griffith, 'Concept of *al-Uqnūm*', pp. 169–191), and it appears that successors followed this lead.

أحدها أنّه لو سلّم لهم ما ادّعوا، فإنّهم لم يشاهدوا أيضاً فعلاً إلاّ وهو قادر، فينبغي أن يثبتوا للقدرة<sup>1</sup> قنوماً آخر.

والوجه الآخر أنّه إنّما كما أنّهم لم يشاهدوا فعلاً حكيماً إلاّ وهو حيّ عالم فإنّهم لم يشاهدوا من له حياة وعلم هو وحياته وعلمه جوهر واحد ثلاثة قنومات.

والوجه الآخر أنّهم لم يشاهدوا من له حياة وعلم لا هو مخالف حياته وعلمه بنفسه ولا بغيره؛ والوجه الآخر أنّهم لم يشاهدوا من له حياة وعلم احدهما ابنه والآخر روحه ولا وجدوا من له حياة وعلم هو علّتها وهما معلولاه، بل الحيّ معلول بالحياة لو لاها لم يكن حياً.

والوجه الآخر أنّه إن<sup>2</sup> كان الباري ثلاثة قنومات جوهرًا واحدًا فقد وجب أن يكون الجوهر جنسًا للثلاثة أو صورة لأنّها جميعاً متّفقة في الجوهر ومختلفة في القنومات، فسبيلها سبيل الأشخاص المتّفقة في إنّها المختلفة في غير ذلك في أنّ ما اتّفقت فيه جنس لها أو صورة على مذاهب فلاسفتهم.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ف || ق: للغدوة. <sup>2</sup> ف || ق: أنه أنه إن. <sup>3</sup> ف، ق: فلا تتفهّم.

One is that, granted their claim, they have not been aware of one who acts who is not powerful either, so they will have to confirm another hypostasis for power.<sup>69</sup>

Further, just as they have never been aware of one who acts in a wise manner who is not living and knowing, so they have never been aware of one who has life and knowledge who with his life and knowledge is one substance and three hypostases.

Further, they have never been aware of one who has life and knowledge who is not differentiated from his life and knowledge by himself and not by something other than him.<sup>70</sup>

Further, they have never been aware of one who has knowledge and life one of which is his son and the other his spirit, and they have never come across one who has life and knowledge of which he is the cause and they are his effects, while the one living is nevertheless the effect of life and would not be living without it.<sup>71</sup>

Further, if the Creator is three hypostases and one substance, then the substance must be a class or form to the threeness because they are all uniform in the substance and distinguished in the hypostases. So their mode is that of individuals which are uniform in their being<sup>72</sup> and differentiated in other than this, because that in which they are uniform is a class or form to them, according to the opinions of their philosophers.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> This argument, which is familiar in anti-Christian polemic at this time, first appears in the early third/ninth century when 'Ammār al-Baṣṭī is forced to argue against his Muslim opponent's argument that there must be more hypostases than Life and Word, that among the many divine attributes Life and Word are pre-eminent; Hayek, *'Ammār al-Baṣṭī*, p. 52.8–14. Al-Nāshī's contemporary Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī makes the same point as this earlier Muslim and al-Nāshī, below pp. 250–253, § 17, and so do al-Bāqillānī, below pp. 152–159, §§ 8–11, and 'Abd al-Jabbār, below, pp. 252–253, § 17.

<sup>70</sup> As substances, contingent beings are formally distinguished from their accidental attributes. So, as with the previous point, the analogy between the observable world and the divine breaks down.

<sup>71</sup> Al-Nāshī presses home the impossibility of the analogy by referring to the description of the Trinity he has given earlier, according to which God is the cause of his Life but is also given life by this hypostasis. Such a relationship never exists between contingent beings and their attributes.

<sup>72</sup> As van Ess, *Häresiographie*, pp. 149–150, suggests, here *inniḥā* is to be read as the abstract noun *immun*, which often occurs in philosophical contexts.

<sup>73</sup> Some years earlier the philosopher Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī made this point more fully, arguing that according to simple Aristotelian logic, as set out in Porphyry's *Isagoge*, the Persons of the Trinity must be part of one class or other of beings and so must be composite; Périer, *Traité de Yaḥyā ben 'Adī*, pp. 6.18–10.8.

والوجه الآخر أنّ الباريّ إن كان جوهرًا وكان هذا الإنسان جوهرًا فقد اتّفقا من باب جوهر فصارا تحت جنس أو صورة، فإن لم يكونا كذلك فهما مختلفان في معنى جوهر فقد صار جوهر يخالف جوهرًا بأنّه جوهر، وذلك نقض ما يدّعون ونقض أصولهم في هذا.

والحمد لله، والكلام عليهم أكثر وأوسع من أن يُحصى ويُنضبط.

Further, if the Creator is substance and the human being is substance they are both uniform with respect to being substance and fall under a class or form. But if they are not thus, they are distinguished in the meaning of substance, and substance begins to differ from substance as being substance.<sup>74</sup> But this is a contradiction of what they claim and a contradiction of their principles on this.

Praise be to God. The argument against them is too large and broad to calculate or determine.

---

<sup>74</sup> In philosophical discourse, where a substance is understood as an independently subsisting entity, there would be no confusion. But in Muslim theological discourse, where substance is the fundamental composite of material being though cannot be associated with the divine, confusion is easy between the physical substance of which humans are constituted and the substance of the Trinity. Al-Bāqillānī makes much of this at the beginning of his refutation of Christian doctrines, below pp. 144–153, §§ 1–7.





### CHAPTER THREE

## ABŪ MANṢŪR AL-MĀTURĪDĪ

The second text comes from the important theologian Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, who was acknowledged as the founder of one of the major Sunnī schools of theology. He was active in Transoxiana around his native Samarqand in the late third/ninth and early fourth/tenth century, and is generally thought to have died in 333/944, about forty years after al-Nāshī'.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Māturīdī is known mainly as a proponent of revealed theology. He is credited with four works on *fiqh*, four on *tafsīr*, and twelve on *kalām*, though the authenticity of a number is open to question.<sup>2</sup> Of these only two are extant, a Qur'an commentary, *K. ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, which was probably compiled by his pupils, and a major compendium of theology, the *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, with which we are concerned here. The titles of others indicate that many of al-Māturīdī's theological concerns, similar to those of other theologians in his day, consisted in refutation of methods and ideas different from his own. The *K. al-radd 'alā al-Qarāmiṭa* (*Refutation of the Carmatians*) and *Radd al-Imāma li-ba'd al-Rawāfiḍ* (*Refutation of the Imamate according to a Rāfiḍī*) point to his attitude towards extreme Muslim groups, while the *K. bayān waḥm al-Mu'tazila* (*A demonstration of the delusion of the Mu'tazila*) leaves little doubt about his attitude towards the leading rationalist group of the time. The *Radd al-uṣūl al-khamsa li-Abī 'Umar al-Bāhilī* (*Refutation of Abū 'Umar al-Bāhilī's 'Five Principles'*), a companion of the leading late third/ninth century Baṣra Mu'tazilī Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī, is another concentrated attack on Mu'tazilī principles, while the three works *K. radd Awā'il al-adilla li-al-Ka'bī* (*Refutation of al-Ka'bī's 'Principles of Proofs'*), *K. radd Tahdhīb al-jadal li-al-Ka'bī* (*Refutation of al-Ka'bī's 'Instruction in Debate'*) and *Radd Wa'id al-fussāq li-al-Ka'bī* (*Refutation of al-Ka'bī's 'Threats to the Godless'*) suggest that he found the teachings of this Mu'tazilī particularly objectionable. The reason for this must

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. Cerić, *Roots of Synthetic Theology in Islām, a Study of the Theology of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī* (d. 333/944), Kuala Lumpur, 1995, pp. 17–35; U. Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī & die sunnitische Theologie in Samarkand*, Leiden, 1997, pp. 135–161.

<sup>2</sup> Cerić, *Synthetic Theology*, pp. 35–61; Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī*, pp. 198–218.

be because he probably knew them at first hand, since Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abdallāh b. Aḥmad al-Balkhī al-Ka’bī returned from Baghdad to the region of Samarqand in his latter years, and worked and taught there until he died in 319/931. Al-Māturīdī acknowledges the renown of this figure in the *K. al-tawḥīd*, when he takes his views on the characteristics of God as representative of the Mu‘tazila as a whole, and somewhat sarcastically calls him ‘the leader of everyone on earth, *imām ahl al-arḍ*, according to them’.<sup>3</sup>

The *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, the authenticity of which is not in doubt,<sup>4</sup> is a particularly valuable work.<sup>5</sup> Not only does it sum up the thinking of a major figure in the early fourth/tenth century reaction to the rationalism of the Mu‘tazila, but it also affords a glimpse of the structure of one form of theology at this time. For it is the first surviving Muslim theological work in which the various topics of discussion are treated together, and are thus ordered in some form of logical sequence. Within this sequence, positive teachings are set out together with attacks on rival and alternative views, and so it is possible to see how a leading theologian understood the logical relationship between his own teachings and those of opponents within Islam and also members of other faiths, including Christianity. Thus, it is instructive to examine the overall structure of the work.

The *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* is a difficult work to follow. Al-Māturīdī wrote in a particularly terse and involved style with few explanatory asides, and he did not give any indication of what he was setting out to do. Added to this, the work has come down in a single manuscript copied in 1150/1737 which contains few signs of what its structural arrangement is. So one has to depend on the flow of ideas. U. Rudolph offers the following structural divisions, according to Kholeif’s published edition: epistemological introduction, pp. 3–11; the existence of the world, pp. 11–17; God, pp. 17–176; prophethood, pp. 176–215; God and human action, pp. 215–323; sin and punishment, pp. 323–373; faith, pp. 373–401.<sup>6</sup> But this can be simplified slightly: the discussion about the existence of the world on pp. 11–17 is effectively a demonstration of its contingent nature and is thus prefatory to the long discussion about

<sup>3</sup> *Tawḥīd*, p. 49.16–18.

<sup>4</sup> Cerić, *Synthetic Theology*, pp. 49–60; Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī*, pp. 208–218.

<sup>5</sup> The edition cited here is F. Kholeif, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd, Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Māturīdī al-Samarqandī*, Beirut, 1970.

<sup>6</sup> Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī*, pp. 221–235.

the existence and characteristics of God, and the discussions about sin, punishment and faith are really one. Thus the work can be divided into the following five general parts: epistemological introduction, pp. 3–11; the existence of God, pp. 11–176; prophethood, pp. 176–215; divine and human action, pp. 215–323; faith, pp. 323–401.<sup>7</sup> Brief invocations at the end of most of these sections indicate the conclusion of a subject, though since the same invocations, usually *wa-lā qūwa illā bi-llāh*, occur in numerous places throughout the work, their presence cannot be taken as too significant.

If we follow this general structure, it is possible to suggest a logical progression through the *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*. Briefly put, it begins with the sources of knowledge, and then moves to the proof of God's existence and his characteristics. The discussion about prophethood arises from this, because it is primarily through prophets that God communicates with created humans, particularly about how they should respond to what he has given them in their earthly life. Then, having demonstrated the legitimacy and function of prophets, it proceeds to outline the details of human action, God's will and decree, and the relationship between faith and Islam. These latter sections are built upon the earlier, in that they assume the existence of God and the relationship between him and creation for the demands and responsibilities of the good life they set out. The hinge between them is the middle section on prophethood, in which al-Māturīdī makes clear that prophets, and the Prophet Muḥammad in particular, are channels of a form of information that agrees with reason but goes beyond it. It is because of the activities of prophets that created humans can know about their purpose and what is demanded of them in fulfilling it.

It must be stressed that al-Māturīdī does not make the logical links that are suggested here at all explicit. His *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* does not have the smoothness of a systematic theology, but rather the roughness of an experiment in linking separate elements of theological discourse into a connected progression. But whatever its real intention, an unmistakable characteristic is its mingling of positive theological teachings with refutation of alternative and rival views. In fact, it is almost as much a work of polemic as of systematised revealed teachings. Thus, for example, almost half of Part 2, on God, is occupied by attacks on Islamic and non-Islamic groups whose doctrines threaten what al-Māturīdī has

<sup>7</sup> Cf. D. Thomas, 'Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī on the Divinity of Jesus Christ', *Islam-ochristiana* 23, 1997, pp. 43–64.

said, among them the *Dahriyya*, who believed in an impersonal force of destiny, the Sceptics (*al-Sūfistā'iyya*), who denied all certainty, and dualist groups such as the Manichaeans, the Dayṣanites, the Marcionites and the Zoroastrians.<sup>8</sup>

This pattern recurs throughout the work, prompting one to think that al-Māturīdī's purpose in combining what are effectively positive and negative expressions of the same topics was to show the soundness of the one both by the consistency and coherence of its teachings and also by the inconsistency and logical chaos of alternative forms. Thus, he brings in the teachings of rival groups as an aid to his task of setting out his own theology by providing counter examples.

If this is so, it must follow that al-Māturīdī's treatment of these rival groups cannot be impartial, which is hardly to be expected in a work of this kind, and more significantly cannot be entire. Rather than treating the teachings of the Zoroastrians, for example, as a whole, he selects those prevalent features that most starkly contrast with the doctrine he wishes to expound and then refutes them. This explains why these attacks occur at various points in the work rather than, say, in a single section. And it also suggests that he has less interest in them for themselves than as examples of wrong belief.

Turning to the short section on Christianity, this attitude can be seen clearly in what al-Māturīdī says here. It comes at the conclusion of the important middle part of the treatise on prophethood, and according to Rudolph's detailed analysis, occurs at the end of the third division within it. Al-Māturīdī has already set out his views on prophethood and refuted those who deny the office on principle, and gone on to examine the arguments of Ibn al-Rāwandī and Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq, earlier Muslims who were notorious for their scathing criticisms of prophethood.<sup>9</sup> Then he goes on to defend the position of Muḥammad, and ends with his attack on the Christians' teachings about Jesus.<sup>10</sup> In this context, it is easy to see why he focuses on Christian teachings and beliefs about Jesus, to the total exclusion of the Trinity and other elements of the faith. Interestingly, he reveals a considerable amount of knowledge about the Trinity in a brief remark earlier in the book,<sup>11</sup> so he obviously understood it in some detail. However, his concern

<sup>8</sup> *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, pp. 110–176.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 176–186, and 186–202.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 202–210, and 210–215.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 119.22–120.3; cf. n. 4 to the translation below.

here is not with Christianity as a whole, but with the distortion of the doctrine that Jesus was more than a human messenger. By showing that this deviant belief has no substance either in reason or revelation, al-Māturīdī can show that there is no reason to doubt the Islamic teaching about Jesus and about prophethood in general.

This trait in treating Christianity and other non-Islamic faiths is glimpsed in al-Nāshī', and even more clearly in the two theologians whose works are dealt with later. It suggests that if Muslim theologians at this time thought they could select single doctrines from another faith tradition, they must have regarded this tradition not as something different from Islam, but as another version of the same tradition of revealed teachings that had gone wrong. In this they were, of course, doing no more than giving structural expression to the Qur'anic view that these faiths were earlier forms of the one faith revealed to particular communities.

The refutation of Christian beliefs about Jesus is very short, less than five pages in Kholeif's edition. Nevertheless, it is packed with a succession of brief, pungently-worded arguments all clustered around the issue of the status of Jesus, and the impossibility that he was divine or the Son of God. Al-Māturīdī's Arabic is economical to the point of opacity, and so full of abstract nouns and pronouns that it presents a formidable challenge to anyone trying to follow its logic. Most of what is contained here in fact has the character of notes rather than a full exposition: one can more easily imagine the master using them as lecture prompts than think of a reader grasping their meaning and appreciating their force. Yet there is some vestige of structure, and every now and then an argument shared with other polemicists can be glimpsed behind the compressed language. Al-Māturīdī was clearly in touch with contemporary currents of interfaith exchanges, though his terse brevity forbids any substantial comprehension of the extent of his indebtedness to other Muslim authors.

The attack begins with a short description of denominational beliefs about the two natures of Christ (§1). Al-Māturīdī describes in one sentence each three differing views that appear to correspond to the Christologies of the Melkites, that the divine and human natures were united in the one person of Jesus Christ, the Nestorians, that the divine and human remained discrete with the one inspiring or controlling the other, and the Jacobites, that the two natures became one. While al-Māturīdī clearly knows the technical language of this debate, employing here the term *tadbīr*, which had long been accepted as the translation

of the Greek *oikonomia*,<sup>12</sup> and earlier *kiyān*, ‘being’, *qunūmāt*, ‘hypostases’, and *tajassama*, ‘to become incarnate’,<sup>13</sup> he uses here the simple terms *rūh*, ‘spirit’, for the divine and human natures in Christ (others often use *lāhūt* and *nāsūt*), *juz’ min Allāh*, ‘a part of God’, for the divine subject of the incarnation, *šāra fī al-badan*, ‘came into the body’, and *yašīlu ilayhi*, ‘combined with it’, for the act of becoming incarnate or of uniting with the human in Christ. It appears that he consciously strives to avoid technical language, maybe to make the enormity of what the Christians claim unmistakable to his readers.

He concludes this brief exposition with a fourth element of Christian teaching about the incarnation passed on by Muḥammad Ibn Shabīb, a third/ninth century follower of the Mu‘tazilī Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām and author of his own *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*.<sup>14</sup> This teaching is attributed to *muwalladīhim*, maybe contemporaries who have attempted to explain their beliefs within the context of Islamic thought much like al-Nāshī’s *muhaddathīhim*,<sup>15</sup> who suggest that Jesus may be understood as Son of God in an adoptive rather than generative sense, and therefore metaphorically. Clearly, this suggestion avoids the intractable difficulty of ascribing an eternal, divine son to God, and therefore satisfies Qur’anic objections, while preserving some notion of his special status and relationship with God, and so meets traditional Christian requirements. Interestingly, it parallels the suggestion recorded by the early third/ninth century author Abū ‘Uthmān al-Jāḥiẓ, also a follower of al-Nazzām, from an unnamed group of Christians who argue that if God could take a human as friend, *khalīl*, in the sense of honouring him, showing him esteem and giving him a unique position (obviously an allusion to Q 4.125 where God takes Abraham as friend), then he could take a human as adopted son in the sense that he showed him his mercy and love, brought him up and educated him, and treated him in an exalted way.<sup>16</sup> The fact that al-Jāḥiẓ also records al-Nazzām’s response to this suggestion<sup>17</sup> makes it too much of a coincidence not to think that Ibn Shabīb is recording the same Christian group’s teaching. Al-

<sup>12</sup> Cf. L. Abramowski and A. Goodman, eds, *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts*, vol. II, *Introduction, Translation and Indexes*, Cambridge, 1972, pp. 113–115, 121; Thomas, *Incarnation*, p. 300, n. 50.

<sup>13</sup> *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, pp. 119.22–120.2.

<sup>14</sup> Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī*, pp. 178–179.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. pp. 72–73, §35 above.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, p. 25.2–5.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29.21–30.8.

Māturīdī takes up this matter towards the end of his refutation (§8), employing exactly the same terminology as al-Nazzām, and showing that he was fully aware of this whole debate.

In accordance with his intention, al-Māturīdī restricts himself to what Christians teach about the nature of Christ, saying almost nothing about the Trinity or any other aspect of belief or observance. This causes one to wonder why he selected this particular element of Christian thought, unlike the other authors in this collection. Why, for example, did he not examine the Trinity in the course of his long exposition on the being of God? The answer is not obvious, though what is clear is that for his purposes Christianity can be typified above all else by its extravagant teachings about the prophet Jesus.

Al-Māturīdī begins his refutation with an argument familiar from earlier Muslim polemics, and also used by al-Bāqillānī and ‘Abd al-Jabbār after him.<sup>18</sup> He first asks why only the one ‘portion’, *ba‘ḍ*, of the Godhead was involved in the act of incarnation rather than the whole, taking up the point that if the three divine hypostases are identical in all ways, as Christians assert, then this singular action by one of them must distinguish it from the others (§2).<sup>19</sup> And he then objects to the whole of the Godhead, and not just one Person, being involved. The answers offered by an unidentified and presumably hypothetical Christian partner, that this portion of the Godhead alone was the Son and participated in the Incarnation because it was the smallest, and that if the entire Godhead participated it would all have been the Son, are very weak and more likely made up by al-Māturīdī himself than heard from a competent opponent.

Still on the question of the relationship between the Persons within the Godhead, the argument moves on to the precise mode of relationship between the Father and Son (§3). The metaphor of one light derived from another, long established as an explanation of the eternal act of begetting, is adduced, and al-Māturīdī repeatedly insists that if this is the basis of the relationship then since the second light must be brought into existence at a particular point in time the Son must also be temporal.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. pp. 182–187, §§32–35, and 254–257, §19 below.

<sup>19</sup> D. Thomas, ‘Early Muslim Responses to Christianity’ in D. Thomas, ed., *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule, church life and scholarship in ‘Abbasid Iraq (The History of Christian-Muslim Relations 1)*, Leiden, 2003, (pp. 231–254) pp. 236–239.

In his discussion so far, al-Māturīdī appears to think that the two issues of the relationships within the Godhead and the divine status of Christ are more or less identical, presumably because they both involve the Person of the Son; he certainly moves from references that appear to concern the eternal Father-Son relationship and the God-incarnate Christ relationship without concern for logical differences. In what he moves on to discuss this becomes explicit. For he now reprises another familiar argument from Christian-Muslim debates, the miracles of Jesus as evidence that he was the divine Son, something traditional Christian teaching would not say in simple terms. His argument is divided into two parts. In the first he rebuts Christian claims that the actual miracles of Jesus were greater or more impressive than those of other prophets, and in the second that the mode of Jesus' action was different from others.

In the first part he begins by arguing that Jesus was no different from Moses, for both performed miracles by appealing to God to act, and both prayed to him. In other words, both approached God in identical ways as human beings approaching the Divinity. Christians have no evidence that Jesus was any different from Moses, and their assertions that he was are specious (§4). He goes on to refer to a series of miracles from Jesus with parallels from Old Testament prophets and the Prophet Muḥammad that graphically demonstrates that they were at least his equal in their miraculous capabilities (§5).

In the second part of this argument he broaches the issue of the mode of Jesus' miraculous actions. The Christian claims that Jesus' power to perform miracles came from himself and was not the power of God acting through him, *qawiya al-Masīḥ 'alā fi'līhi lā anna fi'l huwa bihi*, 'Christ had power over his action; it was not an action that was through him'. This contradicts the view common among Muslim theologians that the power for such abnormal actions was given expressly by God to the prophet, or more often that God himself was the agent of the action, as, for example, when Moses' staff was turned into a snake before him. It was generally agreed that such miracles were performed by God as evidentiary signs that guaranteed the authenticity of a prophet.

Al-Māturīdī refutes the Christian claim first by presenting an implicit dilemma: the Christians assert that Jesus was able to bring physical entities into being in the way that God does, but was also human, as Christians also assert. But the two are irreconcilable, for he must have been either divine or human. Pressing this further, he argues,



maybe with reference to what the three main Christologies he outlines at the start entail, that if Jesus' miraculous power resulted from the presence of a 'part' of God within him (Melkites and Nestorians), this is tantamount to saying that it was God and not Christ who performed the action. And if this 'part' was entirely separated from God (Jacobites), the implication is that there was a creative source unconnected with God. The final inference is that the miracles of Jesus resulted from God granting the power to perform them for a limited time, and so it was not Jesus' own power but God's (§6).

This comparison of the miracles of Jesus and of prophets can be traced from the early third/ninth century right through to the eighth/fourteenth and beyond,<sup>20</sup> and instances are especially common around the time of al-Māturīdī. In fact, the versions given by Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī in the early fourth/tenth century and the little-known Christian convert al-Ḥasan Ibn Ayyūb, who was probably active at this time,<sup>21</sup> are so close that they could all have derived from the same source. All three list the same miracles of Jesus, with the single exception of the crucifixion in al-Māturīdī. In addition, al-Māturīdī and al-Ḥasan adduce a striking number of the same prophetic parallels. In fact, they only diverge where al-Māturīdī cites a feeding miracle of Muḥammad and al-Ḥasan a miracle of Elijah; where al-Māturīdī says raising the dead is greater than Jesus' healing miracles while al-Ḥasan cites Joseph restoring sight to his father and Moses giving eyes to the snake into which his staff had turned and the lice which plagued the Egyptians, and Elisha healing Namaan; and where al-Māturīdī adds the miracle of Joshua parting the Jordan for the Israelites to walk over.<sup>22</sup>

Al-Bāqillānī differs from the other two in his presentation, simply listing Jesus' miracles and in response adducing a few from Moses and no other prophet. But in addition to the same list of Jesus' miracles, one detail of Moses' miracles he includes suggests that he was drawing on

<sup>20</sup> Cf. D. Thomas, 'The Miracles of Jesus in early Islamic Polemic', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 39, 1994, pp. 221–243, with additional references in Thomas, 'Al-Māturīdī on the Divinity of Jesus Christ', p. 61, n. 15, and also R. Ebied and D. Thomas, *Muslim-Christian-Polemic during the Crusades, the Letter from the People of Cyprus and al-Dimashq's Response (The History of Christian-Muslim Relations 2)*, Brill, 2005, pp. 384–387.

<sup>21</sup> He made use of 'Alī al-Ṭabarī's *Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, and so must post-date the mid-third/ninth century, and he is mentioned by al-Nadīm in the *Fihrist*, ed. M. Riḍā-Tajaddud, Tehran, 1971, p. 221.16f., and so must pre-date the mid-fourth/tenth century.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. al-Māturīdī, pp. 103–105, §5 below, al-Ḥasan Ibn Ayyūb preserved in Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. II, pp. 332–335.

the source known to al-Ḥasan, since both mention that when Moses' staff was turned into a snake it had two eyes.<sup>23</sup>

The table below gives the miracles of Jesus and the prophetic equivalents in all three authors. The list of Jesus' miracles follows the order in al-Māturīdī, with the order in al-Ḥasan shown in Arabic numerals and in al-Bāqillānī shown in Roman numerals after. The list of prophetic equivalents shows the miracles cited by al-Māturīdī and al-Ḥasan. It indicates how close the two were in the information they employed.

| <i>Jesus' miracles</i>            | <i>Prophetic equivalents</i>                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. reviving the dead (1, i)       | al-Māturīdī: Ezekiel, Moses<br>al-Ḥasan: Elisha (2 miracles), Ezekiel                         |
| 2. feeding the multitude (6, iii) | al-Māturīdī: Muḥammad<br>al-Ḥasan: Elisha                                                     |
| 3. water into wine (5, iv)        | al-Māturīdī: Elisha<br>al-Ḥasan: Elisha                                                       |
| 4. walking on the water (3, v)    | al-Māturīdī: Joshua, Elijah, Elisha<br>al-Ḥasan: Elijah, Elisha                               |
| 5. ascension (4, vi)              | al-Māturīdī: Elijah<br>al-Ḥasan: Elijah                                                       |
| 6. healing (2, ii and vii)        | al-Māturīdī: (reviving dead is greater:<br>Elijah, Elisha)<br>al-Ḥasan: Joseph, Moses, Elisha |

The similarities go beyond this, leaving little doubt that all three were employing the one source. For they all insist that there was no difference between the way in which Jesus' and other prophets' miracles were performed. Like al-Māturīdī, al-Ḥasan argues that the power to perform them came from God in both Jesus and other prophets, and that they all alike entreated, *taḍarra*, God to manifest miracles through them,<sup>24</sup> and al-Bāqillānī argues that God performed Jesus' miracles just as he did those of other prophets.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, just as al-Māturīdī compares Jesus specifically with Moses, al-Bāqillānī also refers to Moses' spectacular miracles, and argues that if he was not the originator of these but prayed for God to manifest them through him so did Jesus, and that if Jesus acted in this way only to instruct his followers, *'alā sabil al-ta'lim*, so did Moses.<sup>26</sup> Other similarities, in particular

<sup>23</sup> Al-Ḥasan, *Radd*, p. 333.5, al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, pp. 192–195, §41 below.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Ḥasan, *Radd*, p. 335. 3–12.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, pp. 192–193, §40 below.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, pp. 194–195, §42 below.

the same Arabic translation of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane given by al-Māturīdī and al-Bāqillānī, make it even more likely that all three authors were deriving their arguments centred on the comparison of miracles from the same source,<sup>27</sup> though their different approach to this material and use of it indicates that they used it independently of one another. This source remains anonymous, and cannot be traced in any other miracles comparisons that date from the third/ninth or fourth/tenth century. It shows both how lively the activity of anti-Christian polemic was among Muslims at this time, and how al-Māturīdī was aware of main currents within it.

In a coda to this major argument, al-Māturīdī turns to the actual evidence for Jesus' miraculous actions: how can it be known that he performed his miracles from his own power, rather than being the vehicle for God's power? Referring to the epistemological introduction to the *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, al-Māturīdī points out that the acceptable authorities are either reason or unimpeachable revealed sources.<sup>28</sup> But neither is convincing, because if reason is adduced, then Jesus's actions must be treated like all other human actions ('If he makes it reason, then it must apply to Jesus'), and if scripture is adduced then its authenticity must be questioned, though if this is the actual miraculous acts of Jesus then they are both mutually dependent and the argument becomes circular (§7). This is a very compressed argument that defies full explanation in its preserved form, but it suggests that al-Māturīdī had his own way of arguing about the validity of this claim that Jesus' miracles were unique and so proofs of his divinity, and also that he subscribed to the view that Christian scripture cannot be taken as authoritative without scrutiny.

Al-Māturīdī next moves on to what appears to be an argument from Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām preserved by al-Jāḥiẓ that responds to the adoptive Christology quoted from Ibn Shabīb at the start of this refutation (§1). He begins by making the general point that the mere address to Jesus as Son means nothing. In the first place, God could not have addressed a creature in such terms, and in the second many others were also addressed in this way (§8). Al-Jāḥiẓ maybe elucidates what is said here when he refers to certain Muslim theologians (*wa-qad ra'aytu min al-mutakallimīn*, a possible equivalent to al-Māturīdī's *man yaqūlu*) who grant this adoptionist view with certain conditions, and accept the authenticity of divine addresses to humans as son in the Biblical books.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Thomas, 'Miracles of Jesus', p. 232.

<sup>28</sup> *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, pp. 4–6; cf. further Cerić, *Synthetic Theology*, ch. 2.

Coming more specifically to the Christian claim, he centres on the term *khulla*, 'friendship', in the sense of God showing a human a mark of distinction. This must be a reference to Abraham being called 'friend of God', and draws a clear connection with the Christians' analogy quoted by al-Jāḥiẓ, that if Abraham could be friend of God in the sense of being honoured and shown esteem, Jesus could be son of God in the sense that as a human he was adopted and given special love and upbringing by God.<sup>29</sup>

Al-Māturīdī goes on to say that there is a distinction between sonship and friendship, in that while the latter can be used loosely of relationships between members of different species since it is equivalent to affection, *maḥabba*, and affinity, *wilāya*, the former cannot: a man may call an ass or a dog his friend but never his son (§8).

This bears clear echoes of the argument in al-Jāḥiẓ. The latter quotes al-Nazzām as saying that if a man rears a puppy he cannot call it his son, though if he takes over a child and brings it up he may call it son because of the similarity between them. 'Although the similarity between a man and God almighty is more distant than the similarity between the puppy and the man, God is more entitled to make him his son and relate him to himself.'<sup>30</sup> Even more closely, he also argues that since the term *khalīl* is equivalent to *ḥabīb*, *walī* and *nāsir*, it can be accepted that God might give the name 'son' to a human in the sense of upbringing, *tarbiya*.<sup>31</sup>

Al-Nazzām, then, appears to allow the appellation in the terms the Christians suggest, though al-Jāḥiẓ disagrees by taking up his own point and arguing that no matter how close a man and his dog may grow, the one can never be called the other's son, and so since the gap between God and humans is even greater it is impossible for a human ever to be called son of God.<sup>32</sup> It appears that al-Māturīdī agrees with this view, bluntly saying that while it may be allowed for God to have friends among humans he could never have a son. Once again, the distant echoes of this early third/ninth century debate that can be discerned in al-Māturīdī's bald dismissal show his awareness of the main developments in Muslim argumentation against Christianity, and his peculiar talent for condensing points he derived from others

<sup>29</sup> Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, p. 25.2–5.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.4–8.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29.21–30.4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.8–18.

into terse statements that can hardly have been comprehensible without prior knowledge of the original form.

Al-Māturīdī continues with a related point, that from both the side of the very human Jesus and the side of the exalted Divinity, sonship is impossible. On the one hand, as he is depicted in the Qur'an Jesus bore all the characteristics of humanity. Here, al-Māturīdī refers to a number of key verses that mention the human traits of Jesus and his denial of anything more than mortal rank. On the other, the very conception of what God is precludes him from having a son, since this would entail his being prone to human passions, and mean that a begotten son would resemble him, and would also lead to him sharing the characteristics of divinity that are by definition unique to him alone (§§9 and 10). These arguments are firmly based on the Qur'an, and can be seen rehearsed in much fuller form in the refutation of the early 'Abbasid Zaydī Imām al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm al-Rassī.<sup>33</sup>

A brief point made in the course of what al-Māturīdī says here resembles an argument against Christians that is known from his Muslim adversary Abū al-Qāsim al-Ka'bī, to the effect that God must be imperfect until he brings his son into existence. In the other's version, unidentified Christians say that whoever does not have a son is deficient and whoever has a son is complete, so since God must be thought to be complete in every way he must have a son.<sup>34</sup> Al-Ka'bī was quite possibly responding to the early third/ninth century Melkite theologian Theodore Abū Qurra, who sets out this defence of an eternal Son in one of his brief apologetic works.<sup>35</sup>

Al-Māturīdī concludes with a series of short points that more or less repeat what he has said earlier, all re-enforcing the point that there is no logic in saying that Jesus alone was Son of God but that others have equal claim upon the title if it is applied in the way Christians say it should be (§11).

In all this very difficult and compressed refutation it is possible to see some form of structure, even though many of the details are indistinct.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, *'Al-radd 'alā al-Naṣārā'*, ed. I. di Matteo, 'Confutazione contro i Cristiani dello zaydita al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm', *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 9, 1921–1922, (pp. 301–364) pp. 304–308.9.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Ka'bī, *Awā'il al-adilla fī uṣūl al-dīn*, known only from fragments quoted by 'Īsā b. Ishāq Ibn Zur'a, in P. Sbath, *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologetiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens*, Cairo, 1929, p. 60. 14–16.

<sup>35</sup> Theodore Abū Qurra, *Mīmar IV*, ed. C. Bacha, *Les oeuvres arabes de Théodore Aboucara*, Beirut, 1904. p. 80.13f.

It begins with a brief description of Christological beliefs (§1), and immediately moves to an exposure of the illogic in claiming that one part of God could become incarnate without diminishing the whole (§§2–3).

Then comes the longest argument, about Jesus' miracles, in a number of stages. First, it cannot be shown that Jesus was any different from Moses in his mode of action (§4); second, the actual miracles recorded from him are no different in form and quality from those of other prophets (§5); third, it is arbitrary to think that he acted with a miraculous power that was his own, unlike other prophets whose power for miracles came from God (§6); and fourth, the sources upon which Christians depend for this information about his miracles, whether rational or revealed, cannot be accepted without demur (§7).

The argument then moves on to the issue of Jesus as adopted Son of God that caused a stir between Christians and the Muslims al-Nazzām and al-Jāḥiẓ in the early third/ninth century, in which al-Māturīdī agrees with the latter that it cannot be allowed (§8). And it concludes with arguments from both the human and divine sides for denying the relationship (§9–10), and a series of minor points about the impossibility of divine sonship being accorded to Jesus in a real or unique sense (§11).

It will be seen that al-Māturīdī's main contention in all he says is that Christians have no sound basis for making the claims they do, whether they look to reason or to the reports given in their scripture. He shows from a number of aspects that there is no basis in the teaching that Jesus was Son of God, and that he was no more than a human, though one with the special traits of prophet.

As has been seen, in a succession of arguments al-Māturīdī appears to be referring to or employing points known from earlier polemical works. It is impossible to say how he knew about them, though one is tempted to conjecture that Ibn Shabīb, whom he refers to by name and who knew al-Nazzām and presumably al-Jāḥiẓ, a fellow student of the master, personally, and also al-Ka'bī were key sources.

What was al-Māturīdī attempting here? As we have seen, this refutation concludes the important central part of the *Kiṭāb al-tawḥīd* on prophethood and the prophetic status of Muḥammad. In itself it is no more than a vindication of the Qur'an-based teaching that Jesus was a human prophet in the line of divinely-sent messengers, and so may be understood as an apology for the Qur'an against Christian violations. But, by virtue of its position in the work, it may also be understood as a demonstration that claims about the superhuman status of created

beings, even such exalted beings as messengers, are unsustainable, and is thus a vindication of the Islamic teaching about prophets and the role they perform. But it would be too speculative to say categorically what precisely al-Māturīdī was about in this refutation. While it appears to be naturally related to the general discussion on prophethood, its precise role in the overall structure of the work is difficult to ascertain. However, what it does show is that for someone such as al-Māturīdī Christianity did not represent a force that had to be taken as a whole or in its own terms. Instead, it was possible to take one aspect and play with that outside the wider context of belief in which it was located. Christian teachings could thus be used to prove an Islamic point, and that was their sole value.

As has been suggested above, this refutation is extremely difficult to understand both in the details of particular words and phrases and in many of its longer arguments. One is forced seriously to question whether it was ever written to be published or is a series of notes written by or taken down from the theologian.

The *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* is extant in one single manuscript, Cambridge University Library Add. 3651, from the eighteenth century, in which this refutation of the Christians appears on ff. 108v–111v. This is cited as ٤ in the notes to the edition below. The first edition by F. Kholeif from 1971, in which the refutation appears on pp. 210–215, is cited as خ, and the 1997 edition and translation of the refutation by myself published in *Islamochristiana* 23 is cited as ط in the notes. The second edition, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, ed. B. Topaloğlu and M. Aruçi, Ankara, 2003, is cited as ٢ in the notes.





Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī

*Al-Radd ‘alā al-Naṣārā*  
*min*  
*Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*

1. قال الشيخ، رحمه الله: وتفرقت النصارى في المسيح، فمنهم من جعل له روحين، أحدهما محدث<sup>1</sup> وهو روح الناسوتية<sup>2</sup> يشبه أرواح الناس، وروح لاهوتي قديمة جزء من الله صار في البدن ذلك. وقالوا: ليس إلا أب وابن وروح القدس. وآخرون جعلوا الروح الذى في المسيح الله لا جزء، لكن فريقاً منهم يجعل<sup>3</sup> في البدن على كون الشئ في الشئ، وفريقاً<sup>4</sup> التدبير<sup>5</sup> لا على إحاطة البدن به.

---

<sup>1</sup> ت || ك، خ: محدثاً. <sup>2</sup> ك، خ: الناسوتيه. <sup>3</sup> ك، خ || ت: يجعله. <sup>4</sup> ك، خ || ت: وفريقاً على التدبير. <sup>5</sup> ك نص: البديين، ك هامش: التدبير.

1. The Master,<sup>1</sup> may God have mercy on him, said: The Christians are divided over Christ,<sup>2</sup> for there are those among them who attribute two spirits to him, one of them temporal, the spirit of humanity which is like the spirits of people, and an eternal divine spirit, a part of God, and this came into the body.<sup>3</sup> They say: There are no more than Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

Others make the spirit which was in Christ God and not a part, although a small group of them make in the body as it were a thing within a thing, and a small group control, without the body encompassing it.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> This is one of the titles by which al-Māturīdī is referred to throughout the *K. al-tawḥīd*.

<sup>2</sup> The only Christian belief examined here is the divinity of Christ. This introductory section contains a summary of what appear to be the Christological doctrines of the three main denominations known in the Islamic world at this time, the Melkites, the Nestorians and the Jacobites, though al-Māturīdī shows no knowledge of, or maybe concern for, the sophisticated terminology of their competing models that had become commonplace in Islamic accounts.

<sup>3</sup> This resembles the Melkite Christology of two natures in the single hypostasis of Christ. The term *nūḥ* to denote the divine and human natures of Christ, and the reference to the divine spirit being ‘a part of God’ typify al-Māturīdī’s very personal conception of the doctrine. Cf. S. Griffith, ‘Bashīr/Bēsēr: Boon Companion of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III; the Islamic recension of his story in *Leiden Oriental MS 951* (2)’, *Le Muséon* 103, 1990, (pp. 293–327), p. 316, where in a dispute composed by a Muslim possibly in the third/ninth century the Byzantine noble Bashīr is made to say that Jesus had two spirits, *kāna lahu rūḥān fī jasadīn wāḥidīn*.

<sup>4</sup> This single reference to the Trinity is not picked up in the subsequent arguments. Its rather awkward presence here could be explained as a trace of al-Māturīdī’s source at this point. Interestingly, he shows considerable knowledge of the doctrine earlier in the *K. al-tawḥīd*, where he says that the Christians ‘teach about the One in being, *kiyān*, and the three in hypostases, *al-qunūmāt*, part and limit being denied for every hypostasis; they say: He was not incarnate, *ghayru mujassim*, and then became incarnate, *tajassama*; it is known that the body is a form that is divided into parts and portions’ (pp. 119.22–120.2).

<sup>5</sup> This resembles the Nestorian Christology of Christ having two natures and two hypostases. The variant explanations attributed to the two sub-groups reflect some of the metaphors listed by Abū ʿIsā al-Warrāq in the mid-ninth century (Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 70–71), and al-Bāqillānī later in the tenth century (pp. 170–175, §22 below), that the divine Word took the human body as a temple or fitted it on like a garment, or that it controlled, *dabbarat*, mundane affairs and made itself visible through Christ without indwelling or intermingling.

وفيهـم مَن يقول: يصل<sup>1</sup> إليه جزء من الله تعالى ويصل<sup>2</sup> جزء آخر. قال ابن شبيب: سمعتُ من مولديهم أنه كان ابن التبنّي لا ابن الولاد،<sup>3</sup> كما سُميت<sup>4</sup> أزواج محمد، عليه السلام،<sup>5</sup> أمّهات، وكما يقول الرجل لآخر: يا بُنى.

2. قال الشيخ، رحمه الله: فيقال لهم: إذ كانت الروح التي فيه قديمة وهى بعض، كيف صار ابنًا ولم يصر<sup>6</sup> غيره من الأبعاض؟ فإن قيل: لأنه أقلّ، لزمه جعل كلّ أبعاض العالم البنين للأكبر منها، ويلزمه أن يجعل كلّ بعض من البقية كذلك فيصير بكلّيته بنين.<sup>7</sup> ثم المعروف أنّ الابن يكون أصغر من الأب، كيف صاراً قديمين؟ وإن جعل الكلّ في البدن،<sup>8</sup> قيل له: أى شئ منه الابن؟ فإن قال: الكلّ، صير الكلّ ابنًا وأبًا وفي ذلك جعل الأب ابنًا لنفسه.

<sup>1</sup>خ: ليصل. <sup>2</sup>ت: ويفصل. <sup>3</sup>ط: الولادة. <sup>4</sup>ك، خ: سمعت. <sup>5</sup>ك: السلم. <sup>6</sup>ك، خ، ت: تصل. <sup>7</sup>خ، ت || ك: بنين. <sup>8</sup>ك: الندن، خ: البذر.

Among them are those who say: A part from God almighty combined with it and also another part.<sup>6</sup>

Ibn Shabīb<sup>7</sup> said: I heard one of their associates say that he was son by adoption and not son by begetting,<sup>8</sup> just as the wives of Muḥammad, peace be upon him, are called mothers, and as a man says to another, 'My little son'.

2. The Master, may God have mercy on him, said, Say to them: Since the spirit that was in him is eternal and is a portion, how did it become Son and the other portions did not? If it is said: Because it is lesser; he has to make all the portions of the universe sons to those that are bigger than them, and he has to make every portion from what remains the same, so that he will be entirely sons. Further, it is well-known that a son is younger than a father, so how can they both be eternal? And if the whole is regarded as being in the body, say to him: Which thing in it is the Son? And if he says: The whole; he has made the whole Son and Father, in this making the Father a son to himself.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> This appears to be the Jacobite Christology that the divine and human natures became one in Christ, expressed in al-Māturīdī's reductionist way.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Māturīdī employs this ninth century Mu'tazilite disciple of Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām in a number of places in the *K. al-tawḥīd*.

<sup>8</sup> The ninth century stylist Abū 'Uthmān al-Jāḥiẓ, another disciple of al-Nazzām, cites a Christian group who argue along identical lines that just as the prophet Abraham could be called 'friend of God' so can Jesus be called 'son of God', as long as this is understood in an adoptionist rather than generative sense; al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, pp. 25. 2–5.

<sup>9</sup> This first objection centres on the identity of the divine participant in the Incarnation, which is familiar from Muslim refutations of Christianity from the third/ninth century and even earlier (cf. n. 18 in the introduction to this passage). These typically take the form of saying that if the Son acted alone, then each of the three Persons could do so, or else the Son must be distinguished from the others in some way; and if the three Persons acted in unison for the Son, they could equally do the same for another Person. But al-Māturīdī argues instead that if the divine Son, whom he refers to as 'spirit', acted alone then he would establish a relationship that must be repeated throughout creation, while if all three Persons became incarnate there would be no way of distinguishing between them.

§ 2 and part of § 3 are translated in Cerić, *Synthetic Theology*, pp. 167–168.

3. فإن قيل: هو جزء<sup>1</sup> فيه من غير أن كان عن<sup>2</sup> كَلْيَّة الأَصْل نقصان نحو الجزء المأخوذ من السراج؛ عُرِضَ بها لو كان الجزء المأخوذ حادثًا كما حدث في الذي يُؤخذ من السراج، فيبطل قوله في قدم الروح وهو الابن. وإن زعم أنه منقول من الله كالمأخوذ،<sup>3</sup> حل<sup>4</sup> عليه ما سلف. و بعد، فما يُدريه أن المأخوذ من السراج لا ينتقض؟<sup>5</sup> فإن قيل: مُعَايِنَتُنَا إِيَّاه كَذَلِكَ، قيل: لعلَّ الله أحدثه أو<sup>6</sup> يكون كالنار في الحجر فيخرج، وأيهما كان فهو حادث والحادث مخلوق، فلم جاز أن يكون ابنًا؟

4. قال: من أن الله أظهر منه عجائب؛ قيل: وقد أظهر من موسى، فقولوا هو ابن آخر، فإن زعمتم أن ذلك كان بدعاء وتضرّع، فمثله أمر عيسى،<sup>7</sup> مع

---

<sup>1</sup>ك: جزوء. <sup>2</sup>ك، ت || خ: في. <sup>3</sup>خ، ت: كالمأخوذ من السراج. <sup>4</sup>خ، ت || ك: وحل. <sup>5</sup>ت: ينتقصه. <sup>6</sup>ط: ويكون. <sup>7</sup>ك، خ: غيره.

3. If it is said: It was a part of him without there being any diminution in the wholeness of the original, like the part taken from the light;<sup>10</sup> respond along the lines that if the part that was taken originated, as happens in the case of what is taken from the light, then his teaching about the eternity of the spirit, which is the Son, is disproved. And if he claims that it was communicated from God like that which is taken, the foregoing applies to him.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, how does he know that what is taken from the light will not disappear? If it is said: Such is our observation of it; say: Maybe God brought it into being, or it is like the fire in the stone which comes out. Whichever of these, it is temporal and the temporal is created, so how can it justifiably be Son?<sup>12</sup>

4. He says: Because God manifested miracles from him;<sup>13</sup> say: He manifested from Moses, so say that he was another son, though if you claim that this was through invocation and entreaty, the same applies to Jesus, in addition to which on the part of Jesus is that on the night of

---

<sup>10</sup> The metaphor of one light lit from another was used from early times by Christians to explain that the begetting of the Son from the Father did not entail diminution. Al-Māturīdī's reply is simply that if in the metaphor the second light came into being at some point in time, the same must apply to the spirit/Son, and this threatens the principle that it is eternal.

<sup>11</sup> The term *manqūl*, 'communicated', appears to indicate that the second light is not so much a new existence, entirely separate from the first, but is an extension of it. In this case, it echoes the Greek term *merismos*, which was used in Patristic times to explain this form of relationship between the Father and the Son; cf. G.L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, London, 1952<sup>2</sup>, pp. 102f.

<sup>12</sup> The metaphor is unconvincing to al-Māturīdī, because it cannot guarantee the eternity of the spirit/Son. Despite what the Christians say, either a light is lit purposely or emerges naturally from an object such as flint. In either case it comes into being and so cannot be eternal.

<sup>13</sup> The argument moves from the Son as a part of the Godhead to his presence in Christ. The implied link is that the miracles performed by Jesus are evidence that he was divine, and was thus indwelt by the eternal Son.

The argument for Jesus' divinity based on his miracles and Muslim refutations of this was one of the most popular in the polemical literature of the early Islamic period.

ما<sup>1</sup> عن عيسى أنه كان يقول ليلة الإخذ:<sup>2</sup> ”اللهم إن كان من مشيئتكَ أن تصرف هذه الكأس المرّة عن أحد فاصرفها عني“. فإن قيل: كان عن<sup>3</sup> عيسى البكاء والتضرّع<sup>4</sup> ليُعلّم الناس؛ قيل: مثله من موسى. وبعد، فإنه وموسى كانا يُصليان نحو بيت المقدس ويضرّعان؛ ثم البكاء والتضرّع فعل الطباع لا يمتنع<sup>5</sup> عنهما، فما معنى التعليم؟

5. ثم إن استحق هو ذلك بالعمل، لزم ذلك في موسى وغيره. فإن قيل: استحقّ ذلك بإحياء الموتى لا غير؛ قيل: قد أحيا حزقيل إنساناً. فإن عارض بالكثرة، قيل: اليهود يقولون موسى كان أكثر منه؛ قال الفقيه، رحمه الله:

١ك || خ، ت: ما يُحكى. ٢ك، خ: الأحد. ٣ت: من. ٤ط: التصرّف. ٥ت: تمتنع.



the arrest he said: 'If your will is to take this bitter cup from any, then take it from me'.<sup>14</sup>

If it is said: Crying and entreaty on the part of Jesus were to instruct people; say: The same from Moses. Furthermore, both he and Moses used to pray and make entreaties towards Jerusalem; and once again, crying and entreaty are natural actions, neither can be prevented, so what is the meaning of 'instructing'?<sup>15</sup>

5. Next, if he merited this because of action, this must apply to Moses and others.<sup>16</sup> So if it is said: He and no others merited this by reviving the dead; say: Ezekiel revived a man.<sup>17</sup> And if he responds: Prolificness; say: The Jews say that Moses was more prolific than him. The jurist, may God have mercy on him, said: He caused a lifeless staff to become

---

<sup>14</sup> The hypothetical Christian opponents argue that Jesus was unique in performing miracles by his own power and authority, unlike Moses who entreated God to perform them through him. Al-Māturīdī replies by providing evidence that Jesus also entreated God.

Cf. al-Bāqillānī's very similar argument below, pp. 194–195, §42. The two authors are almost certainly employing the same source at this point, to the extent of making the same comparison between Jesus and Moses and of quoting Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane in the same words. While the underlying Gospel version of this prayer cannot be identified with certainty, Luke 22.42 seems closer than either Matthew 26.39 or Mark 14.36.

<sup>15</sup> Again, al-Māturīdī will not concede any uniqueness to Jesus, but sees him performing these actions in the same way as Moses, and like any human being. The argument here echoes a point made over a century before al-Māturīdī by the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I in his dialogue with the Caliph al-Mahdī. The Patriarch explains that Jesus performed worship and prayer 'in order that his disciples might fulfil themselves what they had seen him practising himself, and that they might teach others to do the same'; Mingana, 'The Apology of Timothy', pp. 165–166. The anachronistic reference to Moses praying towards Jerusalem may reflect the assumption that this was the original *qibla* (cf. Q 2.143–144), though this may have been common among Muslims with regard to pre-Islamic prophets, since the pseudonymous writer of the *Letter of 'Umar*, which probably dates from the late ninth century, mentions Jesus and other prophets praying towards Jerusalem; cf. J.-M. Gaudeul, 'The Correspondence between Leo and 'Umar: 'Umar's letter rediscovered?', *Islamochristiana* 10, 1984, (pp. 109–157) pp. 137, 153.

<sup>16</sup> In this comparison of miracles al-Māturīdī employs a source known to the little-known convert al-Ḥasan Ibn Ayyūb and to al-Bāqillānī, who were both active at about this time. Cf. the discussion on pp. 87–89 above.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. John 11.1–44, and Ezekiel 37.1–10 with Q 2.243 (and 259), although there is no mention in these latter of the prophet reviving an individual.

وله إحياء عصا ميتة ثعباناً غير مرّة، فهو أعظم. فإن احتجّ بإطعام البشر الكثير من طعام يسير، عورض بنبيّنا أنّه أحدث في إناء دقيقاً لم يكن فيه. فإن قيل: صير الماء خمراً، قيل: اليسع ملاء<sup>2</sup> عدة آنية لامرأة<sup>3</sup> ثم صيره زيتاً. وإن احتجّ بالمشى على الماء، فهم يُقرّون بذلك ليوشع بن نون ولإيليا واليسع. وإن استدّلوا بالرفع إلى السماء، فهم يُقرّون بذلك لإيليا، وقالوا: ارتفع إلى السماء بمشهد من جماعة. وإن<sup>4</sup> احتجّوا بإبراء الأكمه والأبرص ونحو ذلك، فإحياء الميت أعظم منه، وقد أقرّوا به لإيليا واليسع. مع ما عليهم في إقرارهم أنّ اليهود صلبوه وهزّؤا به، فإن كان الأوّل يدلّ على التعظيم فهذا يدلّ على التصغير؛ وهلاً صنع كصنيع إيليا، حيث أتوه، أن أرسل عليهم ناراً فأكلتهم، أكرمه الله به؟ وإن رجعوا إلى إظهار العجائب في تحقيق التخصيص، عورضوا بمن ذكرت، وبعد فقولوا: الله في السماء وفي الأرض لما أظهر في كلّ شئ منها<sup>6</sup> عجائب، فيوجب تخصيص كلّ شئ من الوجه الذي يخصّونه.

<sup>1</sup>خ || ك : فهم. <sup>2</sup>ك: ملا || خ، ت : اليسع [أحدث] بلا عدة. <sup>3</sup>ط: لامرأة. <sup>4</sup>ك || خ: فإن. <sup>5</sup>ت: فقولوا. <sup>6</sup>ت: منها.

a living serpent on numerous occasions, so he is greater.<sup>18</sup> And if as argument he refers to feeding many people with little food, respond that our Prophet produced in a vessel flour that had not been there.<sup>19</sup> If it is said: He turned the water into wine; say: Elisha filled a number of vessels for a woman and turned it into oil.<sup>20</sup> And if he refers to walking on the water as argument, they themselves acknowledge this of Joshua son of Nun, of Elijah and of Elisha.<sup>21</sup> And if they adduce as evidence the ascension into heaven, they themselves acknowledge this of Elijah, and they say that he ascended into heaven in the sight of many people.<sup>22</sup> And if as argument they refer to healing the blind, the leper and the like, bringing what is lifeless to life is greater than this, and they themselves acknowledge it of Elijah and Elisha.<sup>23</sup>

In addition is what is against them in their own acknowledgement that the Jews crucified him and mocked him, for if the above is evidence of exaltation, this is evidence of diminution. And why did he not do what Elijah did, because when they came after him, he sent down on them fire which ate them up, God honouring him with this?<sup>24</sup>

And if they go back to the manifestation of miracles as a guarantee of being distinctive, respond with the individuals I have mentioned, and further: Say that God is in heaven and earth since he manifests miracles in each thing in them. Thus, each thing has to be distinctive for the reason they make him distinctive.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> The Christian reply may be a reference to such verses as Matthew 11.5 and Luke 7.22, where Jesus talks of many dead people being raised. The corresponding miracles of Moses are mentioned in Exodus 4.3 (though this is the sole Biblical occurrence of the transformation) and in Q 28.31, 7.107, 7.117, 20.69, etc.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Matthew 14.13–21, 15.32–39 and parallels. Al-Māturīdī mentions the Prophet Muḥammad's miracle of feeding many from a little food on p. 203.15f. It is presumably the miracle recorded during the raid on Tabūk in 631, when he fed his army from a small supply of dates and flour, on which cf. Ebied and Thomas, *Muslim-Christian Polemic during the Crusades*, pp. 292–293.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. John 2.1–11, and 2 Kings 4.1–7.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Matthew 14.25 || Mark 6.48–49, and Joshua 3.7–17, 2 Kings 2.8 and 2 Kings 2.14.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Acts 1.9, and 2 Kings 2.7–12.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Matthew 8.1–4, Mark 1.32–34, etc., and also Q 5.110, etc., and 1 Kings 17.21–24 and 2 Kings 4.34–37.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. 2 Kings 1.9–12.

<sup>25</sup> According to the Christians' logic, everything must have the same status as Jesus because God's miraculous actions can be seen in all of them just as in Jesus.

6. فإن قال: قوَّى المسيح على فعله، لا أنَّ فعل هو به؛ قيل: أكان يفعل الأجسام؟ فإن قال: نعم؛ قيل: أهو مخلوق؟ فإذا قال: نعم؛ قيل: بدنه وروجه كبَدَننا وروحنا، ما باله قدر على ما لا نقدر<sup>1</sup> عليه؟ وقدر ذلك<sup>2</sup> بقوة هي جزء من الله أو قوة محدثة؟ فإن قال: بجزء هو يفعل، أبطل قوله في فعل المسيح، وهو إله المسيح<sup>3</sup> ويكون هو الله لا المسيح. وإن انقطع الجزء عن الله فإذا فعل كثيراً من الأجسام غير الله. وإن ادَّعوا اتَّصاله<sup>4</sup> بالله، فيكون الفعل لهما<sup>5</sup> وهما لله، فصار إلى أن الله هو الفاعل. وإن زعموا أنَّ فيه قوة يفعل بها الأجسام لا أنَّها بفعله، جعلوا إله المسيح بعضه يصرفه كيف شاء. وإن قال: يفعل بنفسه لا بقوة حادثة، عُورض بناءً على ما قرَّرنّا.

<sup>1</sup>ط: ما نقدر. <sup>2</sup>ط: وقدر على ذلك. <sup>3</sup>ت: قوله في المسيح وإله المسيح ويكون هو. <sup>4</sup>ك، هامش || ك، نص: اتصا. <sup>5</sup>ك || خ: لها.

6. If he says: Christ had power over his action; it was not an action that was through him;<sup>26</sup> say: Did he make physical bodies?<sup>27</sup> If he says: Yes; say: Was he created? If he says: Yes; say: His body and spirit were like our body and spirit, so why should he have power over what we do not have power over? And was he able to do this by virtue of power which was a part from God, or temporal power? If he says: He acted by virtue of a part;<sup>28</sup> he invalidates his teaching about Christ's action, for it is Christ's God, and it is God and not Christ. And if the part was cut off from God, then in that case one other than God made many bodies. And if they claim that he was joined with God, then the act arose from both of them, and since they are both of God it turns out that it was God who was the agent. And if they claim that in him was a power through which he made physical bodies and they were not a making of his, they make Christ's God a portion of him no matter how they dismiss this. And if he says: He acted through himself not through a temporal power; respond according to what we have set out.

---

<sup>26</sup> The discussion turns to an important element in the argument about the comparison of miracles, the actual agent who performed them. The Christians argue that in the case of Christ he himself was the agent, not God performing miracles through him.

<sup>27</sup> The power to make material substances would be an indication that Jesus was divine. But, as al-Māturīdī goes on to argue, there is a contradiction in an individual with human characteristics having divine power. And if this power derived from God, then ultimately it was not Jesus who performed these miraculous actions but God himself.

<sup>28</sup> The reappearance of *juz'*, which al-Māturīdī used earlier for the divine 'part' that united with Christ, suggests that he has in mind the different Christologies of the denominations he sketches at the beginning. This being so, the first explanation of Christ's action may be that of the Melkites and Nestorians, who preserve the distinctiveness of the divine character in Christ. The second may then be the explanation given by the Jacobites, who could be thought to sever the connection between the divine nature and God in their fusing of the two natures into one.

7. مسألة: ثم نتكلّم<sup>1</sup> في دليل حدث<sup>2</sup> الأجسام. فإن صيّرهُ العقل لزمه في عيسى ذلك. فإن قال: السمع، قيل: ودليل صدق المسموع ما هو؟ فإن قال: حدوث الأشياء؛ يصيّر حدوث الأشياء لا يُعلم إلا بالسمع وصدق<sup>3</sup> لا يُعلم إلا بحدوث الأشياء، فانقطع سبيل معرفة فيها إلا أن يقرّ بالعقل، فيلزمه ذلك في المسيح.

8. ثم عارض من يقول: ليس من الإكرام أعظم من قوله ”يا بُنَيَّ“. قيل: بلى، ”يا أب“<sup>4</sup> أكبر في التعظيم. ولو<sup>5</sup> قال: يوجب التقدّم؛ أبطل اعتباره بالتعظيم لأنّه من ذلك الوجه لا يراد بذلك. ثمّ إذ<sup>6</sup> ثبت ذا لعلّ غيره ممن قد<sup>7</sup> سمّاه به، فإن قيل: في ذلك تسوية بنفسه؛ قيل: قد يقول الرجل لآخر: ”يا أخي“، ولا يريد<sup>8</sup>. وبعد، فإن في خلقه الكرام ولعلّ غيره سُمي به فيشركه فيه الحواريون والأنبياء.

<sup>1</sup>خ، ت || ك: نكلم. <sup>2</sup>ك || ط: حدوث. <sup>3</sup>ت: صدقه. <sup>4</sup>ك || خ، ط، ت: يا أبى. <sup>5</sup>ت: و[لكن] لو. <sup>6</sup>ت: إن. <sup>7</sup>ط: قر. <sup>8</sup>ت: ويل يريد التسوية.

7. Question: Next we discuss the evidence for the occurrence of physical bodies.<sup>29</sup> If he makes this reason, then it must apply to Jesus. But if he says: Report; say: And what is the evidence for the trustworthiness of what is reported? If he says: The coming into being of things; he makes the coming into being of things known only through report, and trustworthiness known only by the coming into being of things. So he cuts off the way of knowing with respect to it, except that he acknowledges reason, so this must apply to him in the case of Christ.

8. Then he responded to the person who said: There is no greater mark of honour than his saying: ‘My little son’.<sup>30</sup> Say: Surely ‘Father’ is greater as conferring esteem. If he should say: It necessarily entails priority; he disproves his point about conferring esteem, because it could not be meant in this sense. And since it is accepted that there were maybe others than him who were called by it, if it is said: In this is a conferring of equality with himself; say: A man may say to another, ‘My brother’, and not mean it. Furthermore, although there may have been a mark of honour in his creation, maybe others were called by this, so that the disciples and prophets share in it.

---

<sup>29</sup> Although the word *mas’ala* is written in heavy strokes, suggesting a new section, this discussion is a continuation of the preceding argument. Al-Māturīdī turns from the mode of Christ’s miraculous action to the results, asking how these can reliably be known. If this is through reason, there must be a rational analysis; if through report, the veracity of this must be proven. But this leads to circularity, because the reports, which are presumably the Gospels, can be verified as true only because of the extraordinary events they contain, while these extraordinary events can only be verified because they are contained in the reports.

Al-Māturīdī explains at the opening of the *K. al-tawḥīd*, pp. 4.6ff., that *sam’*, account, and *‘aql*, reason, are the two complementary bases of knowledge; cf. Cerić, *Synthetic Theology*, pp. 83–97.

<sup>30</sup> The argument turns to what appears a Biblical point, maybe the divine address to Jesus at his baptism in Mark 1.11 || Luke 3.22. Al-Māturīdī’s response to the Christian claim is to generalise and argue that there is a higher form of address than they say. The next step is not clear, but appears to be that while the Christian sees in the address to Jesus a sign that he was the eternal Son (understanding *taqaddum*, ‘priority’, in the sense of being prior to creation), al-Māturīdī simply denies the logic of this, possibly because it would mean senior and junior eternal beings.

وعُورِضَ بِالْحُلَّةِ وبالأُمُور أَنَّهُ يجوز القول به على الإكرام؛ قيل: أَمَّا النُبُوَّةُ<sup>1</sup> فلا تجوز إِلَّا في متَّفَقِ الجنس، لأنَّه لا يجوز أن يقول للحمار<sup>2</sup> والكلب<sup>3</sup>، فلذلك لم يجز في الأول. وفي الحُلَّةِ<sup>4</sup> جهة المحبَّة و الولاية، ويكون<sup>5</sup> في غير الجنس كما يجب الحقَّ في جهة الولاية والمحبَّة والملكيَّة<sup>6</sup> ونحو ذلك. مع ما يجوز أن يكون لله أحرَاء وأحباب من الخلق ولا يجوز مثله في البنين، ولا قوَّة إِلَّا بالله.

9. والأصل في هذا عندنا أنَّ الاختلاف رجع إلى وجهين. أحدهما الربوبيَّة: والله تعالى، جلَّ ثناؤه، قد بيَّن إحالة ذلك بأكله وشربه ودفع الحاجات إلى مكان الأقدار<sup>7</sup>، ووصفه بالصغر والكهولة، وعبادته لله تعالى وتضرَّعه له وخضوعه، ودعائه الخلق إلى عبادة الله وتوحيده، وبشارته

<sup>1</sup> ك || ق: النبوة. <sup>2</sup> ط: للحوار. <sup>3</sup> ت: والكلب، "يا بني". <sup>4</sup> ك، خ، ت: الجملة. <sup>5</sup> ت: وقد يكون. <sup>6</sup> ك، خ: الملائكة؛ ت: والمحبة ونحو ذلك. <sup>7</sup> ك، خ: الأقدار.



'Friendship' and the like, that speaking of these as a mark of honour is justifiable, is answered.<sup>31</sup> Say: Sonship is only justifiable within the same species, since it cannot justifiably be said to an ass or a dog; likewise, it is not justifiable in the first instance. In friendship there is an element of affection and affinity, and it occurs outside a species, as correctly applies to affinity, affection, custodianship and similar.<sup>32</sup> So, while it is justifiable for God to have friends and loved ones from among creatures, the like is not acceptable with regard to sons. There is no strength other than with God.

9. The basis of this as we see it is that the distinction<sup>33</sup> derives from two reasons. One of them is lordship, and God almighty, great is his praise, has made clear the impossibility of this in his eating, drinking, satisfying bodily needs in the privy, and his description as young and mature; his worshipping God almighty, entreating him and abasing himself; his calling creatures to the worship of God and to the affirmation of his unity, his announcement of Muḥammad, may God bless him and give

---

<sup>31</sup> The appearance of the term *khulla*, 'friendship', suggests a link with Abraham, who according to Q 4.125 God took as friend, *khalīl*, and in turn raises the possibility that al-Māturīdī has in mind the early third/ninth century discussion in which Christians defended Jesus as son of God in an adoptive sense by analogy with acknowledging Abraham as friend of God. In response, Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām said that although a human is more distant from God than a dog is from a human, it is acceptable to call a human son of God 'from the point of view of upbringing', *li-makān al-tarbiya*, on the grounds that terms such as *khalīl*, *ḥabīb* and *walī*, *khulla*, *maḥabba* and *wilāya* are equivalent. What he means is that the epithet used for Abraham can suggest the kind of intimacy that exists between equal beings but Muslims do not understand it in this way, so there are no grounds for objecting to the term 'son' as long as it is kept to the adoptive sense suggested; cf. al-Jāhīz, *Radd*, 29.21–30.8.

<sup>32</sup> The third term here appears in the MS as *malā'ika*, 'angels', which must be a mistake. In the original it may have been some derivative of *malaka*, hence the suggested emendment, though even that is not convincing. In a curious correspondence that is no more than an isolated sentence, al-Bāqillānī argues that according to the logic of the argument of his Christian opponents that Christ must have been divine because of the mode of his birth, angels must also be divine because they do not come from parents, *wa-lā 'alā wajh al-tabanna*, 'nor according to adoption' (cf. pp. 198–199 below; §46), by which he presumably means that they are not some form of being that was granted the status of angels. Both polemicists may preserve an element of a longer argument.

<sup>33</sup> This is the distinction between God and humans.

بمحمّد، صلّى الله عليه وسلّم، وإيمانه بالرسول؛ ثمّ جعل، جلّ ثناؤه، عليه<sup>1</sup> جميع آيات الحدث وإمارات العبادة ما جعل في جميع العالم. وكذلك هو، صلّى الله عليه وسلّم، لم يدع لنفسه سوى العبادة والرسالة، فالقول له بالإلهية قول لا معنى له، مع ما لو جاز ذلك لجاز لكلّ من البشر. والعجب أنّهم لم يكونوا في حياته ومقامه في الأرض يرضون له رتبة الرسالة مع ما له من البراهين. ثمّ بعد رفعه، أو موته عند عامّتهم، لم يرضوا له بالعبادة والرسالة حتّى جعلوا له رتبة الربوبية ليشهد عليهم بالخلقة والجوهر والبنیان.<sup>2</sup> وكلّ شيء منه بالكذب في الإبتداء والإنتهاء.

والثاني أن يكون ابنه، ذلك يخرج على وجوه. أحدها الولادة،<sup>3</sup> وذلك محال فاسد لغنى الربّ عن أن تمسّه الحاجة أو تغلبه الشهوة أو تعتريه الوحشة، وهى أسباب طلب الولاد،<sup>4</sup> على إحالة كون الولاد<sup>5</sup> من غير جوهر الوالد، والله تعالى بذاته خارج عن شبه الخلق أو عن المعنى الذى يحتمل ذلك الوجه، و على ما بين الله أنّه لو اتخذ لهوًّا لما احتمل أن يتّخذ مما عندنا.

10. وبعد، فإنّ كلّ ذى ولد يحتمل الشرك وزوال ملكه إليه، ومنّ هو بذاته ربّ ملك قادر لا يحتمل ذلك. ومنّ يقول لا معنى له أن يكون جزء من

<sup>1</sup>ت: عليه من جميع. <sup>2</sup>ك، والحرف بعد 'ب' غير منقوطة || خ: بالبيان. <sup>3</sup>ك: الولادة || خ: الولاد. <sup>4</sup>ك، خ || ط: الأولاد. <sup>5</sup>ك، خ || ط: الأولاد.

him peace, and his belief in the prophets.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, he, great is his praise, effected on him all the signs of temporality and marks of humanity that he effected throughout the universe. Similarly, he, may God bless him and give him peace, never claimed for himself anything other than human and prophetic status. So the teaching that he was divine is a teaching that has no meaning, not to speak of the fact that if it were applicable then it would be applicable for all people.

The wonder is that during his lifetime and period on earth they were not prepared to accord him the rank of prophethood, despite the proofs he provided. Then, after his ascension, or his death according to their ordinary people, they went further than according him humanity and prophethood, for they gave him the rank of lordship so that he might witness for them in humanity, physical substance and make-up.<sup>35</sup> But all of this is deceit from beginning to end.

The second is that he should be his son, and this is a violation for many reasons. One of them is begetting, which is impossible and erroneous because the Lord is free from being affected by need, being overcome by yearning or being seized by loneliness, which are the reasons to seek to beget. It is also impossible for what exists through begetting to be different from the substance of the begetter, and God almighty is by his essence outside any resemblance to humanity, or the sense which this point implies. Also, as God has made clear, if he were to take pleasure it would not mean his taking the kind that we do.<sup>36</sup>

10. Further, everyone who has a child endures sharing and surrender of his authority to him. But he who by his essence is Lord, King and powerful may not endure this. He makes no sense who says that a part

---

<sup>34</sup> These examples of Jesus' human traits are mostly taken from the Qur'an: his eating food 5.75, his self-abasement before God 4.172 and 19.30, his denial of claiming equality with God 5.116, his announcement of Aḥmad 61.6, and his acknowledgement of prophets before him, e.g. 42.13. The penultimate of these serves as a reminder of the general context in which this refutation of Christianity occurs, the vindication of prophethood and of Muḥammad in particular as God's supreme channel for communicating with the created order.

<sup>35</sup> There is an echo here of the doctrine that Christ redeemed humanity by assuming human nature and taking it with him to heaven; cf. Hebrews 2.14–18.

<sup>36</sup> This is a play on Q 21.17, underlining the point of God's utter distinctiveness from creatures.

الشئ ولده ويجب أن يكون غير كامل حتّى يوجد،<sup>1</sup> وجهة الآيات لا يوجب ذلك لأنّ طريق معرفة البنوّة في الشاهد ليس الآيات مع ما قد شورك فيها. وبعد، هو يدعى الصدق في الخلوص له بالعبودة، فالآيات توجب ذلك لا غير، أو من جهة الفضل ينسب إلى ذلك، والأمر المعروف في الشاهد أنّ ذلك ليس من أسماء التعظيم بل تسمية<sup>2</sup> المسيح والرسول أجل وأعظم في ذلك.

II. وبعد، فقد لكثير<sup>3</sup> من الخلق من الله تعالى كرامات خصّوا بها، لم يوجب شئ منها اسم البنوّة. على أنّ البنوّة في الكلام إنّما هو من الصغار والضعاف لا من أصحاب القوة والرفعة، وهكذا شأن أثر البنين فيكون بها إكرامه وتعظيمه بصغره، إذ قد يكون ذلك من العظماء في الصغار، ولا قوّة إلّا بالله. أو أن يكون الله من حيث مفزعه وملجأه في كلّ أمر ونائبة. فمن ذا الوجه

<sup>1</sup>ت: ومن يقول "لا معنى ... حتى يوجد" فهو محق، وجهة. <sup>2</sup>ط: تسميته. <sup>3</sup>خ، ت: فقد أعطيت لكثير.

from a thing is its son, and that he must be imperfect until he exists.<sup>37</sup> The reference to signs does not necessitate this, because the way of recognising sonship in the observable sphere is not signs, apart from the fact that these were shared.<sup>38</sup>

Further, he claims truthfulness in sincerity for himself regarding worship, and the signs require this and no more.<sup>39</sup> Alternatively, he is connected with this in terms of excellence, though it is well-known in the observable sphere that this is not among the names that confer greatness, but being named 'Christ' and 'Messenger' is more splendid and significant in this respect.<sup>40</sup>

11. Further, there have been miracles from God almighty to many creatures who have been distinguished by them, with nothing in them compelling the title of sonship. On top of this, in conversation sonship is only ever related to the young and feeble, not to those with strength and stature. It is the same with the matter of the effect that sons may have, that his honour should derive from this and his significance from his smallness, because this is a case of the significant in the small;<sup>41</sup> and there is no strength except in God. Or that God was effectively his refuge and protection in every condition and crisis. In this respect every

---

<sup>37</sup> Cf. the argument reported by Abū al-Qāsim 'Abdallāh b. Aḥmad al-Balkhī, al-Ka'bī (d. c. 319/931), in his *Awā'il al-adilla fī uṣūl al-dīn*: 'They [the Christians] say: We find that he who does not have a son is deficient, and he who has a son is more complete, and we must ascribe to Him the attributes of completeness and authority' (the work is known only from fragments quoted by 'Īsā b. Ishāq Ibn Zur'a, in P. Sbath, *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologetiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens*, Cairo, 1929, p. 60. 14–16). The original Christian argument is probably that presented by Theodore Abū Qurra in *Mīmār IV*, ed. C. Bacha, *Les oeuvres arabes de Théodore Aboucara*, Beirut, 1904, p. 80.13f.

Al-Māturīdī refers to al-Ka'bī repeatedly in the *K. al-tawḥīd*, and so may have derived this argument from him.

<sup>38</sup> Al-Māturīdī repeats his earlier point about Jesus' miracles not providing evidence of his divine sonship. He gives two reasons: rationally miracles are not indications of a father-son relationship, and anyway other prophets were given signs.

<sup>39</sup> Jesus himself claimed that he was no more than a sincere believer, and the miracles he was granted support only this because prophets before him, also sincere believers, were also granted miracles.

<sup>40</sup> If 'this' denotes divine sonship, which is the subject of this whole latter discussion, this presumably means that while Christians might think that Jesus' outstanding character and the unique features of his life indicate his divine status, this is not the case.

<sup>41</sup> This very compressed argument appears to deny that a being who is known primarily as a son can be significant or have a lasting influence; surely the father would have more importance.

كلّ الخلق كذلك، وذلك كتسمية الهاوية أمّ أهلها والأرض أمّ أهلها، فمن ذا الوجه يكون من حيث المفرع للخلق والمصمود<sup>١</sup> إليه وإن كان لا يتكلّم بمثله إلاّ بإذن، ولا قوّة إلاّ بالله.

---

<sup>١</sup>ك، ت || خ: المعمود.

human is the same: it is like calling Eve the mother of her people, and the earth the mother of her people. In this respect he is effectively the refuge of creatures and the one on whom they can depend, although he should only be referred to in such ways when there is support. There is no strength except in God.





## CHAPTER FOUR

### ABŪ BAKR AL-BĀQILLĀNĪ

The third text comes from Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, the first important theologian of the Ashʿarī school whose works have survived in quantity. He lived during the fourth/tenth century, but apart from the date of his death in 403/1013, not much is certain about his life.<sup>1</sup>

The sources agree that, like al-Ashʿarī before him, al-Bāqillānī was born in Baṣra. On the computation that he must have been at least forty when he was sent on an official embassy to Constantinople in 371/981, M. Allard suggests he was born in about 330/941–942.<sup>2</sup> This would be about six years after the death of al-Ashʿarī in 324/935, among whose disciples al-Bāqillānī is regarded as head, and during the latter years of al-Māturīdī who died in 333/944. He was educated by immediate disciples of al-Ashʿarī, and must have shown exceptional promise because he became sufficiently well-known to be summoned to the court of the Buyid *amīr* ʿAḍud al-Dawla in Shīrāz to represent the doctrines of Sunnī Islam among Shīʿīs and Muʿtazilīs. He remained with the *amīr* as tutor to his son, possibly until the court moved from Shīrāz to Baghdad in 364/975.

In Baghdad al-Bāqillānī became a popular lecturer,<sup>3</sup> and took part in debates with well-known scholars of the day.<sup>4</sup> He was also known as a leading Mālikī jurisprudent, and served as *qāḍī* in a provincial town for some years. An indication of his intellectual standing is that when

---

<sup>1</sup> The early sources are synthesised by M. Allard, *Le problème des attributs divins dans la doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī et de ses premiers grands disciples*, Beirut, 1965, pp. 290–296, and Y. Ibish, *The Political Doctrine of al-Bāqillānī*, Beirut, 1966, pp. 4–27. R.J. McCarthy in his article 'Al-Bāqillānī' in *EI*<sup>2</sup>, vol. I, announces that he has a full-scale study in preparation, but this never appeared (cf. his remarks in the English preface of the *K. al-tamhīd*, Beirut, 1957, p. 12).

<sup>2</sup> Allard, *Attributs divins*, p. 291. Ibish, *Political Doctrine*, p. 5, cites an uncorroborated reference to 338/949.

<sup>3</sup> Ibish, *Political Doctrine*, pp. 18–19, names 16 of his pupils.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam, the Cultural revival during the Buyid Age*, Leiden, 1986, pp. 67–68; *idem*, *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam, Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī and his Circle*, Leiden, 1986, pp. 77–78.

‘Aḍud al-Dawla entered into negotiations with the Byzantine Emperor Basil II over border fortresses, he sent al-Bāqillānī in an embassy to Constantinople in 371/981.<sup>5</sup>

Y. Ibish lists from early sources fifty-five titles of works written by al-Bāqillānī,<sup>6</sup> the great majority on legal and theological matters, and many written against Muslim and other opponents. Among these, the titles of *K. al-ibāna ‘an ibṭāl madhāhib ahl al-kufr wa-al-ḍalāla*, (*The Exposition of the Falsifying of the Doctrine of the People of Unbelief and Error*) (I in the list), and *Fī al-mu‘jizāt*, (*On Miracles*) (XXI), give hints that they may have been directed at non-Muslims. Neither of these has survived, and of the six works that have, the most important are the *Ijāz al-Qur’an*, (*The Inimitability of the Qur’an*) (XLVII), and the *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, (*The Introduction*) (LIII), which is one of the first surviving treatises of Islamic theology.<sup>7</sup>

There can be little doubt that this work was composed by al-Bāqillānī himself, since not only does the author refer in it to other works known to be written by him, but all the early Muslims who mention the work attribute it to him.<sup>8</sup> However, its full title is uncertain. It is universally referred to as *Al-tamhīd* or *K. al-tamhīd*, while the three MSS in which it is preserved name it as *K. al-tamhīd fī al-radd ‘alā al-Mulhida wa-al-Mu‘aṭṭila wa-al-Rāfiḍa wa-al-Khawārij wa-al-Mu‘tazila* (Paris arabe 6090); *Kitāb fīhi tamhīd al-dalā’il wa-talkhīṣ al-awā’il* (Istanbul, Aya Sophia 2201); *Kitāb tamhīd al-awā’il wa-talkhīṣ al-dalā’il* (Istanbul ‘Aṭif Afandī 1223).<sup>9</sup> The editors of the first edition, which is based only on the Paris MS, understandably give it the full title found there,<sup>10</sup> while

<sup>5</sup> Kraemer, *Philosophy*, pp. 78f. tells how while the mission failed because the emperor was not interested in the negotiations, al-Bāqillānī nevertheless made his mark by not only debating with Christian theologians but also refusing to kiss the floor before the emperor, and when Basil had the entrance door lowered so that al-Bāqillānī would at least have to give the appearance of bowing as he came in, entering into the imperial presence backwards. Cf. W.Z. Haddad, ‘A Tenth-Century Speculative Theologian’s refutation of the Basic Doctrines of Christianity: Al-Bāqillānī (d. A.D. 1013)’, in Y.Y. Haddad and W.Z. Haddad, *Muslim-Christian Encounters*, Gainesville, 1995, p. 85, where other details of his life and reputation are included.

<sup>6</sup> Ibish, *Political Doctrine*, pp. 7–16.

<sup>7</sup> McCarthy in his *EI*<sup>2</sup> article says that it is ‘the earliest example that we have of a complete manual of theological polemic’, though this was before the publication of al-Māturīdī’s *K. al-tawhīd*.

<sup>8</sup> McCarthy, *K. al-tamhīd*, Beirut, 1957, pp. 28–29, (Arabic introduction).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>10</sup> M.M. al-Khuḍayrī and M. ‘A.-H. Abū Rīda, *Al-tamhīd fī al-radd ‘alā al-Mulhida wa-al-Mu‘aṭṭila wa-al-Rāfiḍa wa-al-Khawārij wa-al-Mu‘tazila*, Cairo, 1947.

McCarthy calls it simply *K. al-tamhīd*. Whether or not any of these titles is original, all three attempt to sum up the contents of the work, and variously show its introductory and polemical character.<sup>11</sup>

Since it refers to at least six of al-Bāqillānī's other works,<sup>12</sup> the *K. al-tamhīd* cannot date from his early years. His main biographer, the Qāḍī Abū Faḍl 'Iyāḍ (d. 544/1149), says that he wrote the work for his tutee, 'Aḍud al-Dawla's son.<sup>13</sup> He certainly wrote it at the behest of an *amīr*, since he makes clear in the opening pages that he was sensitive to this prince's desire for a comprehensive and concise work on the elements of theology, together with arguments against non-Muslim groups.<sup>14</sup> He adds that he has also included arguments against Muslim groups and discussions of political topics, and has spared no effort to make the work concise, as the *amīr* wishes, and to comply with his other requests.<sup>15</sup> This *amīr* is not identified, but he may easily be 'Aḍud al-Dawla, who requested such a work for his son. If this is the case (though the possibility that this *amīr* or a successor asked for the work at a later stage in Baghdad cannot be excluded), the *K. al-tamhīd* must date from before the move from Shīrāz to Baghdad in 364/975, which, if the date of al-Bāqillānī's birth given above is at all accurate, makes it a composition of his late twenties or thirties.

The refutation of Christianity in the *K. al-tamhīd* rewards close analysis. But as with the slightly earlier *K. al-tawḥīd* of al-Māturīdī, of which al-Bāqillānī shows no direct knowledge, its position in the overall structure of the exposition is also instructive to identify. This structure is not immediately apparent and must be discerned from the flow of the argument, which can be summarised as follows:

1. Introduction, sources of knowledge, material existences (pp. 3–21),
2. The existence and character of God (pp. 22–33),
3. Refutation of non-Muslim groups, including dualists and Christians (pp. 34–131),
4. The prophethood of Muḥammad and refutation of those who deny it (pp. 132–190)—this section comprises discussions about Muḥammad's

<sup>11</sup> Ibish, *Political Doctrine*, pp. 24–27, takes the view that the work is expressly one of refutation and not, as McCarthy claims, a manual of theology. See further on this below.

<sup>12</sup> McCarthy, *Tamhīd*, p. 29 (introduction) and n. 9.

<sup>13</sup> *Tartīb al-madārik wa-taqrīb al-masālik*, excerpted in Khudayrī and Abū Rīda, *Tamhīd*, p. 250.7–9.

<sup>14</sup> McCarthy, *Tamhīd*, pp. 3.14–4.15.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4.16–5.2.

- miracles and in particular the Qur'an, refutations of the Barāhima and Jews, and proofs that the Qur'an abrogates earlier revelations,
5. Refutation of anthropomorphists, explanation of the divine attributes, defence of the uncreated nature of the Qur'an, the Mu'tazila on the divine attributes, and the beatific vision (pp. 191–279)—this section treats the specifically Islamic view of God, and combines a presentation of the Ash'arī doctrine of divine attributes, including the Qur'an as the uncreated speech of God, and of the character of God, with refutations of Muslim groups such as the Mujassima, and the Mu'tazila who hold other views on this,
  6. The all-embracing will of God, human capability, denial of causality, createdness of actions, refutation of the Qadariyya, and divine omnipotence (pp. 280–345),
  7. Faith and Islam (pp. 346–350),
  8. The promise and the threat, intercession at the last judgement (pp. 351–377),
  9. The Imamate (pp. 378–386, continued in Khudayrī and Abū Rīda, pp. 178–239).<sup>16</sup>

These nine sections can be condensed into a few logically connected themes, as follows:

1. Human knowledge,
2. Proof from the contingent nature of the world of the existence of God, and the character of God,
3. The prophethood of Muḥammad and the miraculous nature of the Qur'an,
4. Islamic teachings about the oneness and justice of God,
5. Faith and action,
6. The Imamate.

This analysis calls for some justification, particularly in view of the rather different structure proposed by Allard,<sup>17</sup> which we shall come to below. The structure of the first part is easy to discern. Al-Bāqillānī identifies reliable sources of knowledge, and on the bases of these shows that the nature of the world which they unfold points to an Initiator and Maker. The world is therefore proof of the existence of God, and also of his general character as distinct, one, intentional, and so on.

In an important next step he establishes that God sends messengers to the world, because without them his intention for the creation could not be perceived or followed. Thus, messengers are the crucial means

<sup>16</sup> McCarthy does not include the latter parts of this section, because to his mind they are the summary of a separate work on the Imamate; *Tamhūd*, pp. 11 (English introduction), 21–23 (Arabic introduction).

<sup>17</sup> Allard, *Attributs divins*, pp. 296–298.

by which God communicates with the created order. Supreme among them is Muḥammad, and his revelation is infallible.

From here al-Bāqillānī unfolds the teachings of the Qur'an as these are understood within the Islamic community. He begins with the distinctive teachings about the nature of God, and moves on to the intimate relationship between the divine will and human responsibility, the nature of faith and Islam, eschatology as given in the Qur'an, and lastly the nature of authority in the community.

The whole presents an articulation of Ash'arī traditional Islamic teachings, in which unassisted human reason has the capacity to deduce from investigation of the world the nature of contingent reality, and infer from that the existence and character of the Creator, though only revelation provides fuller information and instruction. Thus, in this scheme the function of the prophet, and supremely the Prophet Muḥammad, as channel of God's revealed will and guidance is pivotal. For it is through him that the contents of full belief are made accessible, and the proper relationship between the individual, the community and God becomes realisable.

It must be said that al-Bāqillānī nowhere states that this is the structure of the *Tamhīd*. The closest he comes to this is at the very beginning, where in his encomium to the unnamed *amīr* who is the inspiration, he says that the prince desired a work in which were brought together the following:

The nature and forms of knowledge,  
The things that can be known and the nature of existent things,  
The contingency of the world and existence of its Creator,  
The unity and characteristics of this Creator,  
His justice towards his creation, and utter independence from it,  
His sending messengers as representatives between himself and his  
servants,  
His granting miracles to his messengers as proof of their authenticity,

Arguments against opponents of Islam, such as the Christians, Jews, and so on.

Al-Bāqillānī added to this a few further elements:  
Difference between true Muslims and others within Islam,  
The virtues of the Prophet's Companions and the legitimate leadership  
of the four Caliphs.<sup>18</sup>

This is a clear statement about the work's contents, but it says little about the logical connection between them and the structure of the

<sup>18</sup> *Tamhīd*, p. 4:5–19.

whole. This structure is, at first glance, clouded by refutations of opponents of Islam, and Muslim opponents within Islam, that are interspersed among the presentation of positive doctrine. But these refutations, in fact, give valuable clues to the structure that we have proposed, and the position of each within the work repays examination.

The first refutations follow the initial exposition of the nature of the contingent world and of the Creator. They are directed at: proponents of the materialistic principle that the world exists without external influence; believers in star deities as sustainers of the world, dualists, Zoroastrians, Christians, Barāhima.<sup>19</sup> It might appear, in fact, that this is a block of refutations against non-Muslim religions, as Allard suggests.<sup>20</sup> But such a simple explanation cannot account for the positioning of the refutation of the Jews at a later point, and another reason must be sought. As we have suggested above, these non-Muslim groups are characterised by two main beliefs. All those up to and including the Christians hold beliefs about God that contradict the teachings presented in the immediately preceding presentation of the nature of God as a single, all-powerful being. And then the Barāhima (the Brahmins who represent Hinduism for al-Bāqillānī and other early Muslims) are portrayed as either denying prophethood entirely or all prophets after Adam, because in their view God does not give precedence to one human over another. Here there is a subtle shift from preoccupations with God in himself to God and his relationship with the created order through messengers. Although al-Bāqillānī does not signal any move in his discourse, it becomes apparent that this latter refutation functions as a bridge between the presentation of the nature of God and refutation of those who disagree with it, and the following presentation of prophethood. In this second thematic section there are further refutations, of the Jews who are defined by their rejection of any major prophet after Moses.<sup>21</sup>

It is important to understand that in his refutations of these non-Muslim groups al-Bāqillānī does not attack the whole range of beliefs they hold: his arguments against Christianity centre only on the Trinity and Incarnation, the two doctrines that challenge his own presentation of the oneness and transcendence of God, and they ignore the atonement and everything else. Each group is thus held up as a counter-

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34–131.

<sup>20</sup> Allard, *Attributs divins*, pp. 296–297.

<sup>21</sup> *Tamhīd*, pp. 160–190; cf. Haddad, ‘Al-Bāqillānī’, p. 93 n. 17.

example to Muslim orthodoxy, and the weakness of its position, as al-Bāqillānī amasses arguments successively to demolish it, serves to prove that alternatives to the Islamic teachings are not viable. Thus, refutations of non-Muslim groups—and indeed, refutations later in the work of groups within Islam who disagree with al-Bāqillānī’s own—contribute towards building the case of the total coherence of Islam and the rational absurdity of pursuing any alternative.

Allard suggests a very different structure, as follows:

Knowledge and its methods (pp. 6–14),  
 The existence of God and his principle attributes (pp. 15–33),  
 Apology for Islam by countering its main opponents (pp. 34–196),  
*Tawhīd* (pp. 197–285),  
*ʿAdl* (pp. 286–345),  
*Al-manzila bayn al-manzilatayn* (pp. 346–350),  
 Eschatology (pp. 351–377),  
*Imāma* (pp. 378–386 and Khudāyārī and Abū Rīda pp. 160–239).<sup>22</sup>

As Allard points out, the influence of the structure of Muʿtazilī thought is clear in the latter parts, where their five principles are key structural members. But his proposal simply does not stand up to scrutiny. As we have shown above, there is no single apologetic section. And, furthermore, the discussion about the existence and characteristics of God is divided between the two sections on pp. 22–33 and 197–297,<sup>23</sup> which in Allard’s plan is inexplicable, though here is accounted for as those characteristics and attributes which can be deduced by unaided reason and those that are referred to in Islamic scripture.

In taking this view Allard may well be exhibiting the influence of A. Abel. He does not cite the earlier scholar’s article on the *Tamhīd* in connection with this structural analysis, but he does refer to it at this point.<sup>24</sup> At the beginning of this article on the chapter on Christianity in the *Tamhīd* Abel states as more or less established fact that the origin of both Christian and Muslim compendia of faith in the medieval Arab world was John of Damascus’ *Peri tēs orthodoxou pisteos*, which is composed of three parts, the first on the means of acquiring true knowledge, the second a refutation of heresies, and the third an exposition of the true faith. ‘Le *Tamhīd*’, he says, ‘ne manque pas à

<sup>22</sup> Allard, *Attributs divins*, pp. 296–298.

<sup>23</sup> Allard includes the section on God’s omnipotence here (*Tawhīd*, pp. 280–285), but as is pointed out above, it seems more appropriate as the opening section to the discussion on God’s justice.

<sup>24</sup> Allard, *Attributs divins*, p. 297 n. 1.

cette tradition'.<sup>25</sup> But, as we have shown above, close attention to the structure of the work shows there is no section on heresies as such, and the *Tamhīd* cannot be divided in such a simple manner. Like other Muslim theologians before and after him, al-Bāqillānī made use of doctrines from other faiths and Muslim groups at will to show the perils in reason for anyone who deviated from the way of faith he set out, and in consequence the virtues of his form of Islam. And his work owes as much to native Islamic perceptions of the internal relationships in theological discourse as to any early precedents. Certainly, there is no direct link between the *Tamhīd* and John of Damascus' writings.

In fact, a much closer comparison is with al-Māturīdī's *K. al-tawhīd*, which we have already shown<sup>26</sup> demonstrates the same flow of ideas from an epistemological introduction, through arguments based on the contingent existence of the world to proof of God's existence, then through the all-important role of the prophet, to the specifically Islamic concerns of human action, sin and punishment, and faith. Whereas incidental differences rule out direct dependence, the close logical relationship, in which both works emphasise the prophet as bringer of all but the barest knowledge about God, suggest some connection through an earlier model. This would have to be a third/ninth century precursor, which has been so extensively forgotten that the faint palimpsest-like traces of its outlines can only just be glimpsed in these two witnesses.

It becomes apparent from the structure of the *Tamhīd* proposed here that al-Bāqillānī's refutation of Christianity serves, together with refutations of groups that held there was no God, several gods and two gods, to prove through the unsustainability of its doctrines that logically there can only be one God, as has been proved in the preceding section of the work on the existence of God and his rationally deducible characteristics, and as the revealed teachings of Islam will go on to demonstrate. Thus, al-Bāqillānī uses Christianity in the same way as the three other theologians treated here, to show that as an alternative to Islam it is wrong. And like many other anti-Christian polemicists of this period he does this by attacking the Trinity and Incarnation, the two doctrines that threaten to compromise the Islamic doctrine of God.

---

<sup>25</sup> 'Le chapitre sur le Christianisme dans the "Tamhīd" d'al-Bāqillānī (mort en 1013)', in *Études d'Orientalisme dédiées à la mémoire de Lévi Provençal*, vol. I, Paris, 1962, pp. 1–2.

<sup>26</sup> Above, pp. 80–83.



Unique among surviving anti-Christian works of this time, the refutation of Christianity in the *Tamhīd* does not begin with an exposition of beliefs. From the very start al-Bāqillānī contents himself and his reader with brief single-clause elucidations of terms and concepts as they are introduced. Why he does this is difficult to say, particularly in a book that is meant to be an introduction. Maybe he had in mind the need for conciseness which he mentions at the beginning,<sup>27</sup> and certainly it is his style throughout the work; the most he gives on any group is a sentence or two at the start, as with the dualists and Zoroastrians.<sup>28</sup>

Without any prefatory words, he begins by questioning the Christian claim that God is substance, and he presents four unattributed arguments in favour of it, all centring on the point that God must be noble and supreme (§1).<sup>29</sup> The first argument resembles the argument attributed by al-Nāshī' al-Akbar to Christian 'contemporaries', based on analogy between phenomenal objects and the transcendent sphere.<sup>30</sup> The other three are all based on the more ancient division between self-subsistent beings who act independently and those that require another for their existence and are incapable of action. All four arguments seek to suggest that God is the highest instance of a series of beings, and thus imply some continuity of identity between him and the created order.

Al-Bāqillānī seizes on this point and responds with an argument that so obviously picks up the logical flaw within it that it makes one wonder how accurately and fully he has summarised the Christian points. His rejoinder is that there is no obvious continuity between the phenomenal and transcendent worlds, so the Christians are wrong to take this for granted. In consequence of asserting that everything in existence is like things in the phenomenal world they are forced to logical extremities, for example to say that the world is eternal (he argues this by saying that physical things must be part of an infinite series), or that the Maker of the world acts in the same way as manufacturers in the world, and that the whole of existence conforms to existence as it is witnessed by creatures (§§2–3).

Pressing this weakness into more detailed reasoning, he continues by showing that according to the analogy God must be temporal like all

<sup>27</sup> *Tamhīd*, p. 4.5, 20. Abel, 'Chapitre', p. 2 n. 4, suggests the unlikely alternatives that it may be because al-Bāqillānī either mistrusted his information or had too little.

<sup>28</sup> *Tamhīd*, pp. 60, 70.

<sup>29</sup> Haddad, 'Al-Bāqillānī', pp. 87f., suggests that this argument may be a response to the Jacobite Christian Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. pp. 73–74 above, §35.

known substances, and must bear accidents (§§4–5). Furthermore, in the phenomenal world the agent of an action is not a substance but a composite body into which substances combine. So, according to this logic God must be a body. To the reply that all bodies change and decay, he replies that substances all participate in combinations with other substances, a concept that would offend Christians as much as Muslims. In addition, if substances can be distinguished as noble and mean, the latter being part of the material world and the former, not as the Christians contend, so can bodies, and hence there is no bar to God being a body, which both sides would regard as absurd (§§6–7).

Al-Bāqillānī does not hesitate to adduce specifically *kalām* categories here, apparently assuming that his opponents' argumentation is framed within it. It clearly is not, because the obvious inconsistencies that he eagerly exposes could surely not have escaped them if they had. The argument turns on a conflation of two different and divergent uses of the same term *jawhar*, which in the Christian context denotes a self-subsistent agent, as they are reported saying, and so can aptly be attributed to God, and in the Muslim context denotes a basic element of the material world upon which the constituent parts of physical reality are constructed. It is unfortunate that Arabic-speaking Christians chose just this term to translate the Greek οὐσία, but it is maybe remiss of al-Bāqillānī to ignore the way it is used in Christian *kalām* and seemingly to assume that in that context it bears the same meaning as in Muslim thought. Maybe this misunderstanding is a sign of the dominance of Muslim theology at this time, with Christians finding it hard to preserve their own particular expression of doctrine, and Muslims seeing no reason to heed differences. The upshot is that the proposition that God is substance is overthrown, and a fundamental element in Christian thinking is destroyed.

Al-Bāqillānī next moves onto the second element in the doctrine of the Trinity, and asks the apparently simple question, which is known from the third/ninth century onwards, why do the Christians restrict the divine hypostases to three? The model he reports is of the one Divinity possessing the two attributes of Life and Knowledge. This also goes back to the early third/ninth century, and is particularly compliant with the attributes-based explanation referred to here, in which the Spirit and Son are identified with Life and Knowledge and thus seen as attributes of the Father.

Al-Bāqillānī's first argument is relatively simple. He adduces a fourth attribute of power, and to the Christian insistence that this is identical

with Life shows that it is like Knowledge, and thus either Knowledge must be conflated into Life or the additional attribute of power must be conceded (§§8–9). He does the same with a further series of attributes, showing that either they must be distinct and therefore additional to the three hypostases, or if they are identical with the hypostasis of Knowledge, as is asserted, they prove that Knowledge can be identical with Life, returning to his original point (§10).

To this stage it has been implied in the explanation given by the Christians and in al-Bāqillānī's rejoinders that God is what he is because of what he can be observed doing. But now the Christians make clear that God is what he is because of himself rather than because of anything outside himself. This seems to be saying that God is Trinity without reference to his relationship with the world, an immanent rather than economic interpretation of the doctrine. This insistence shows that all the preceding argument based upon analogy with visible phenomena is no more than an attempt at explanation that was couched in terms which Muslim interlocutors would find familiar and understand. But al-Bāqillānī succinctly replies that if this is the case God's being eternal is also unique to him, and, just like his being living and knowing, this must be a hypostasis and hence additional to the others (§11).

Whatever sources al-Bāqillānī has employed to this point remain unknown, neither he identifying them nor surviving polemics bearing close resemblances. But in his following arguments he is deeply indebted to the *Radd 'alā al-thalāth firaq min al-Naṣārā* of the third/ninth century scholar Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq, though he is by no means slavish in his borrowing because he selects only a few of the arguments from the exhaustive range that is set out by his predecessor.

He turns now to the relationship between the divine substance and the hypostases as this is understood by the major Christian denominations. To the Nestorians and Jacobites who say the substance and hypostases are identical, he briefly says that in their view the one is simple and undifferentiated and the others are many and differentiated, so if they are identical the substance must be both undifferentiated and simple and also differentiated and multiple; this is plain ignorance (§12). And to the Melkites, who distinguish the substance from the hypostases, he says that there must either be four divine entities or, if they try to identify substance and hypostases, that the existence of the substance has no meaning (§13). Furthermore, in an echo of the earlier arguments, if the Melkites insist that the substance and three hypostases

are only three, why do they not acknowledge that the three hypostases are no more than one? But if each hypostasis is divine, none of the denominations can maintain that God is one, for there must be three (§14).

Following the argumentative flow of Abū ʿĪsā's *Radd* (we will examine how al-Bāqillānī uses this below), he presses the Melkites further on their teaching that the substance is different from the hypostases. It must either be exactly like the hypostases, in which case it will be Son, Spirit, a hypostasis of an additional substance, and so on (§15), or be different in respect of their being hypostases and its substance, which means that it is both different and identical for the same reason because the substance and hypostases are supposedly identical. This is all absurd. There must either be a real difference between them or they must be identical (§16). To this a Christian complains in an unexpected attempt to turn the tables that the Ashʿariyya themselves say something very similar to this about the divine attributes, that they are neither identical with the essence of God nor different from it. He alludes here to the principle which al-Ashʿarī adopted from the early third/ninth century theologian ʿAbdallāh Ibn Kullāb, and which can be traced earlier still,<sup>31</sup> that the attributes are neither God nor other than him. The Christian appears to have found an apt parallel between the two doctrines of the Godhead, in both of which various constituents are identifiably discrete from others and at the same time are identical. But al-Bāqillānī rejects it, somewhat awkwardly, by appealing to the formula of his *madhhab* and saying that in his own teaching God is not other than his attributes so the issue of how there can be difference between them, as there is between the substance and hypostases, does not arise. In his own teaching God is also not identical with his attributes, so the issue of whether he differs from them through himself or not does not arise (§17).

The Christians try to press this further by saying the same about the hypostases and substance as about the divine attributes and essence, that they are neither identical with it nor distinct from it. But al-Bāqillānī simply retorts that they must either be exactly the same, and so identical, or different, and so distinct. Other attempts at comparison of things that are identifiably different but not distinct, such as a hand and a person, prove to be inappropriate (§18).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. J. van Ess, 'Ibn Kullāb und die Miḥna', *Oriens* 18–19, 1967, pp. 92–142.

In resisting this comparison between the Ash'arī doctrine of the *ṣifāt* and *dhāt Allah* and the Christian doctrine of hypostases and substance, which seems right to both the Christians cited here and to Mu'tazilī opponents who refer to it openly,<sup>32</sup> al-Bāqillānī appears less than straightforward. He concedes that in his own doctrine God is neither identical with nor distinct from his attributes, but he will not be drawn on how this resembles or differs from the Christian version. If there is a difference in his own mind he does not state it, and his resistance to the comparison seems here to boil down to the fact that while the Christians claim the substance is both identical with the hypostases and distinct from them by virtue of itself, he does not say the same about the divine essence. But the matter of how in his mind the essence and attributes are neither the same nor different is left unexplained.<sup>33</sup>

This turn-around, in which the Muslim is forced onto the defensive at what may be an apologetic attempt at explanation by the Christian or else a polemical puzzle intended to force al-Bāqillānī to concede the correctness of the Christian case, offers an intriguing insight into relations between faiths at this time. For it shows that Christians knew as much about the details of Islamic theology as Muslims did about Christian, and attempted to frame their doctrines according to its structures with as much vigour as early third/ninth century predecessors such as 'Ammār al-Baṣrī had done before them.<sup>34</sup>

Al-Bāqillānī concludes his attack on the Trinity with two further discussions about the relationships within it. In the first he deals with definitions of the hypostases as attributes of the substance, particularities and individuals, in each case showing that the form of relationship entailed either violates Christian teaching or invalidates the doctrine of the Trinity (§§ 19–20). The brevity of his arguments suggests that he is summarising a source down to its essentials rather than developing his own ideas.

<sup>32</sup> In his attack on Christianity in the *Mughnī*, below pp. 230–231, § 4, 239–241, § 10, 'Abd al-Jabbār makes precisely this comparison.

<sup>33</sup> In *Tamhīd*, p. 213, 5–6, he explains that the attribute 'is the thing that exists on the being described or belongs to it' (cf. Allard, *Attributs divins*, p. 304), which seems to support the idea that it is neither identical with it nor distinct from it. But he does not pursue the point further. Haddad, 'Al-Bāqillānī', p. 86, declares that he employs Ibn Kullāb's formula, though he gives no reference and is probably inferring this from what is known about al-Bāqillānī's master al-Ash'arī.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Griffith, 'Concept of *al-Uqnum*'.

In the second discussion he challenges the hierarchical structure of the Trinity according to the formulation that the Son and Holy Spirit are particularities of the Father. For if all three hypostases are equal, as the doctrine states, there is no reason why the reverse might not obtain and the Father be a particularity of the Son and Holy Spirit (§21). Al-Bāqillānī's point here concerns the arbitrariness of promoting one Person over the others, and shows the looseness in explanations of the doctrine that makes it vulnerable to criticisms of this kind.

These arguments conclude the refutation of the doctrine of the Trinity. It comprehensively includes attacks on the substance, the number of hypostases, the relationship between the substance and hypostases, and these two short attacks on the meaning of the term hypostasis and the relationship between the three. Throughout, al-Bāqillānī's approach can be described as bemusement at what for him is a ridiculous and wholly irrational portrayal of God, though his arguments attempt to show from within the logic of the doctrine itself its weaknesses and incoherence. In this he follows the same method as many other polemicists, including Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq, upon whom he heavily relies in much of what he says. But like Abū 'Īsā and such nearer contemporaries as Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī,<sup>35</sup> he tends to reduce the doctrine to an assemblage of propositions (rather than a description of revealed truth), and applies to it all the inventive skills that as a consummate theologian he has at his command.

Could anything different be expected, such as some sensitivity to Christian attempts to explain why they hold this doctrine? Probably not, not only because al-Bāqillānī was not engaged in dialogue or its equivalent, nor even polemic, but in a demonstration of the errors inherent in this alternative version of Godhead to the one he was promoting in the *Tamhīd*, but also because it appears from some of the doctrinal explanations he takes up that Christians were attempting to explain their beliefs in terms of the *kalām*. This can be seen from their defining the hypostases as attributes or particularities (§19), and most strikingly in the analogy they attempt to make between the relationship of hypostases and substance and attributes and essence (§17). In these circumstances it is understandable that al-Bāqillānī should unhesitat-

---

<sup>35</sup> On whose refutation of Christianity see D. Thomas, 'A Mu'tazilī Response to Christianity: Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī's Attack on the Trinity and Incarnation', in R. Ebied and H. Teule, eds, *Studies on the Christian Arabic Heritage in Honour of Father Prof. Dr. Samir Khalil Samir S.I.* (*Eastern Christian Studies* 5), Leuven, 2004, pp. 279–313.

ingly treat the doctrine as he would any formulation fashioned by a Muslim theologian.

The refutation now turns to the second major Christian doctrine that challenges the Islamic doctrine of God, the Incarnation. Here, al-Bāqillānī does uncharacteristically present some explanations of what various Christian groups understand it to be, based largely on Abū ʿĪsā (§22), and proceeds to refute them one by one. The analogy of the Uniting with a face appearing in a mirror is inappropriate because the face does not appear in the mirror in any real way (§23); likewise with the imprint of a seal in wax, because the actual image on the seal is not transferred to the wax in the way the Son is supposed to have become one with Jesus (§24). The analogy of the human and divine mixing and mingling is also wrong, because if such actions are possible for the Divine then so must other actions of contingent beings, blurring the distinction between the two (§25). Similarly, the Jacobite teaching that the two natures became one is wrong because this would mean the eternal becoming temporal and would open the logical possibility of the temporal becoming eternal (§26).

The comparison between the inhering of the Word in Christ without actual contact and the dwelling of God in heaven or inhering in his throne, as the Qurʾān teaches, is also wrong because the dwelling of God in heaven and sitting on his throne does not take the form of inhering, which would be touching (§27). Here al-Bāqillānī seems more at a loss than in his other ripostes. The Christian argument, which may well date back to the Melkite bishop Theodore Abū Qurra who was active in the early third/ninth century, either requires the analogy to be accepted, or demands a reason for why it is inappropriate. But while al-Bāqillānī will not concede the former, he seems unable to provide the latter, saying simply that God is in heaven and on his throne but not saying how, the principle of *bi-lā kayf*. In a refutation of this kind, such a retreat is lame and shows how fragile some of these arguments are.

The Melkite explanation, which agrees with that of the Nestorians and Jacobites that the two becoming one must have entailed mixing and blending, is impossible because for reasons already given it involves the eternal touching the temporal (§29). More than this, if the eternal and temporal became one, the same can apply to temporal things, with the consequence that two measures of a commodity can be blended into one, and two accidents can be in one place at a time (§30). If this is conceded, the physical world breaks down.

A last point on this matter, concerning the Melkite doctrine that the divine Word united with the universal human nature rather than an individual human, this must mean that the Word, who was a simple hypostasis, became both universal and individual, which is impossible (§31).

In despatching this range of metaphors and analogies by which the Christian denominations try to explain the Incarnation, al-Bāqillānī shows the overwhelming importance of the place held in his theology by the principle that the Divine is utterly distinct from the created. It is so major in its influence that he has only to show that an explanation can be reduced to it to prove its impossibility. In this he betrays the extent to which he has taken the Christian doctrine into his own framework of theology and expects it to conform.

In a new argument that is likewise almost certainly taken from Abū Ṭīsā, though is well-known in other polemics, al-Bāqillānī now asks about the actual agent of the act of Uniting. He shows that whichever of the constituents of the Godhead this was, whether a single one or all of them, this must have been involved in the Uniting and so become incarnate. Furthermore, if a single hypostasis, the Son, was alone involved in the action, there is no reason why other hypostases should not have performed independent actions, which may lead to mutually contradictory outcomes (§§32–33). Here, al-Bāqillānī's insistence that the Persons and substance of the Godhead are independent, separate entities that can each act alone is displayed to its most devastating effect. The attempts of Christians at this time to insist that while they could be named individually they were not individuals has no force, and he can simply apply the Qur'anic principle, referred to in Q 21.22, of mutual hindrance between plural deities.

Still on this issue of a single hypostasis participating in the act of Uniting, but now with respect to the birth of Christ, al-Bāqillānī raises the awkward matter of how the Son alone could do this when, according to the Christians, he was identical with the other hypostases (§34). And then, with respect to the human nature involved, he argues that if this was the universal human, which is what the Melkites claim, then if the Word united with this in a specific body, this body would have included the universal human, which is absurd (§35). Furthermore, Mary could not have given birth to the Son alone if he was not distinct from the other hypostases (§36), and since she must have been an individual and specific she could not have given birth to the universal human without ridiculous consequences (§§37–38). Here, the Ash'arī



follows the same *ad hominem* method as Abū 'Īsā beforehand, drawing out implications in the doctrines he has in front of him and showing their increasing contradictoriness.

Then, turning to the death of Christ and applying the same sort of logic, al-Bāqillānī shows that if the Uniting of divine and human continued through the crucifixion the Divinity must have died (§38), or that if it did not continue it cannot have been Christ who died (§39).

Moving from the polemical approach influenced by Abū 'Īsā to another influenced by the long tradition of comparing Jesus' and other prophets' miracles, al-Bāqillānī next asks why the miracles of Jesus should be a reason to make him alone among the prophets divine. In the first place, there is no reason to doubt that it was God who actually performed Jesus' miracles and not Jesus himself (§40), and in the second place Jesus was no different from a prophet such as Moses about whom no claims of divinity are made. Attempts to distinguish between the two when their actions are the same are futile (§§41–42).

In the same way that he cuts down Abū 'Īsā's prolixity to a few salient points in his previous arguments, al-Bāqillānī turns this well-known motif of miracles comparisons to his own purposes by removing actual comparisons of individual miracles completely and focusing on a key comparison between Jesus and Moses in order to show through their utter similarity in action the absurdity of suggesting any difference in their status. He betrays detailed acquaintance with Gospel texts in the examples of Jesus' human actions which he gives in §42, and also betrays his own presuppositions in the way he has taken the logic of all he is contesting into the conceptuality of Islamic theology in his analysis of the prophet miracle, which for him, like 'Abd al-Jabbār and others,<sup>36</sup> is performed by God as evidentiary proof of the prophet and not by the prophet himself (§40).

The discussion on Jesus' miracles continues with the Christians saying that Christ's various actions were performed by his two natures, the miracles by his divine nature and his attestations that he was subject to God and a human by the human nature. But al-Bāqillānī deftly turns this to the comparison with Moses and other prophets, suggesting that they also may have possessed two natures and shown them in similar ways (§§43–44).

---

<sup>36</sup> Cf. 'Abd al-Jabbār, pp. 318–321, §52 below, and also Thomas, 'Miracles of Jesus', pp. 240–243.

Coming to the conclusion of his refutation, al-Bāqillānī shows further knowledge of Gospel texts in discussions about the meaning of some of Jesus' words. When the Christians claim that their reason for ascribing divinity to him is the verse from Matthew that says a virgin is with child and his name will be called divine (Matt 1.23), he retorts that Moses is also called divine in Exodus, and also that the verse in Matthew need not mean that God would call Jesus divine but that people might do this mistakenly (§45). When the Christians refer to the virgin birth as warrant for regarding Jesus as divine, he points in time-honoured fashion to the Qur'anic comparison between the births of Jesus and Adam (§46). When they refer to Jesus' words about being one with the Father, he offers an interpretation that tones down the meaning from identity between the two to closeness of teaching as a result of God giving Jesus thorough instruction (§47). And finally, when the Christians refer to Jesus' claim in John that he was before Abraham (John 8.58), he suggests that this means the teachings given by Jesus and not the person of Jesus himself (§§48–49). One suspects that once again al-Bāqillānī may be summarising an earlier source here, which treated these and other proof-texts in greater detail. It is more likely that he did this than spend time combing through the Gospels himself, and, given the clearly literary character of his exegeses, more likely than gathering them from direct debate with Christians. The abruptness with which these exegeses stop, and the absence of any clear organising principle here, suggest that they may even have been added at some point after the earlier arguments were completed. But since al-Bāqillānī says nothing about any source, and other extant works show no trace of what this may have been either, this must remain a hypothesis.

In the second part of his refutation, on the act of Uniting, al-Bāqillānī attempts the same comprehensive approach as against the Trinity. He starts with attacks on the various explanations of the form taken by the uniting of the divine and human natures (§§22–31), and then turns to the actual divine agents involved, whether the Son alone or others (§§32–34). The characteristically Melkite doctrine that the human nature involved in the act was the universal substance rather than a specific individual requires some special arguments (§35), including how the birth of Christ included this universal human nature (§§35–38), and this is followed by discussion of how the divine nature could have been involved in the death of Christ (§39). Then, lastly al-Bāqillānī deals with a series of reasons offered by the Christians for regarding Christ

as divine, his miracles (§§40–42), the division of activities between his divine and human natures (§§43–44), and lastly claims ascribed to him in the Gospels (§§45, 47–49), and the peculiar mode of his birth (§§46). This is certainly comprehensive, though it is structurally looser than the first part on the Trinity, with more obviously the character of a compilation from earlier sources.

Despite this, the succession of arguments nevertheless serves al-Bāqillānī's purpose to show that this claim that the divine came into intimate contact with the human does not withstand scrutiny. Thus the principle which he seeks to support, that God is radically distinct from all other beings, is upheld.

It will readily be seen that both in the doctrines he chooses to attack and in the arguments he employs al-Bāqillānī is concerned about the single issue of the ways in which Christianity threatens to compromise the strict monotheistic unity of God as he and other Muslims apprehend it. Christian doctrine as such is not his main interest, and he appears to have selected from earlier refutations only those elements that require special attention—the Melkite doctrine of the universal human being prominent among these—so as to ensure that all the major aspects of Christianity that may call Islamic beliefs into question are countered. His refutation of Christianity thus makes an eloquent contribution to his overall aim of presenting the Islamic doctrine of God as complete and coherent, and of demonstrating that since all rivals are rationally wanting it is the only acceptable one.

The absence of an introduction or conclusion to this refutation, and the succession of often unconnected though related points within it, support the view that it was not a major concern of al-Bāqillānī in its own right, but really an adjunct to his main discourse on the strict oneness of God. As we have said repeatedly, he seems to have employed Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq's *Radd 'alā al-thalāth firaq min al-Naṣārā* as a main source, and he often seems to be guided by that in his presentation of arguments. But it is not his only source, and he is by no means slavish in his use of it. His approach to this and to other known sources shows his incisiveness and independence of mind, and reveals his intention to employ the most telling arguments in the most concise manner.

Al-Bāqillānī's indebtedness to Abū 'Īsā becomes apparent after his initial attack on the divine substance, when he discusses the relationship between the substance and the hypostases in §§12–21. His brief descriptions of the three denominations' doctrines of the Trinity in

§§12 and 13 are equivalent to parts of Abū ʿĪsā's descriptions in §§1 and 2 of his *Radd*; his arguments in §12 correspond to Abū ʿĪsā's first argument against the Nestorians and Jacobites in *Radd* §§16–18; and his arguments in §§13–18 represent the gist of Abū ʿĪsā's long argument against the Melkites in *Radd* §§30–69, which he reduces to its salient features. He disregards the whole of the remainder of Abū ʿĪsā's detailed attack on the Trinity, apart from the discussion at its very end of different explanations of the hypostases as particularities, individuals and attributes: §§19–20 are equivalent to *Radd* §§141–150.

There is a similarly close relationship between the attacks on the Uniting in the two works. Al-Bāqillānī's list of metaphorical explanations of the divine-human relationship in §22 corresponds closely to Abū ʿĪsā's in *Radd* §§11, though his arguments against them in §§23–30 are not close. And his refutation of the claim that the entire Godhead effected the act of Uniting for the single hypostasis of the Son in §§32–34 is close to Abū ʿĪsā's §§151–160. His particular interest in refuting the Melkites in §§37–38 relates to *Radd* §188, and his discussion of the crucifixion of Christ and what this implies for the divine Word in §39 corresponds to *Radd* §§179–186.

It can thus be seen that much of the contents of the *Tamhūd* refutation parallel the earlier work, though since al-Bāqillānī does not follow the structure of the *Radd* exactly and introduces a few new arguments, it cannot be concluded with certainty whether he was using the *Radd* itself or an intermediate work of some kind.<sup>37</sup> If the former, he shows how well he understood the *Radd*, and how acutely he was able to identify its most significant arguments.

Other parallels show that while al-Bāqillānī was largely indebted to Abū ʿĪsā, either directly or not, he also incorporated other arguments from earlier times. One of these was the tried and tested proof that if the hypostases are identical as attributes of God's essence there must be more than three, §§8–10. Over a century earlier the Nestorian ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī strenuously tried to counter this charge, showing that it was already part of the Muslim anti-Christian arsenal.<sup>38</sup> And nearer al-Bāqillānī's own time it was used by al-Nāshī' al-Akbar, Abū ʿAlī al-

<sup>37</sup> Abū ʿĪsā wrote his *Radd* in long, medium and short versions (Thomas, *Trinity*, p. 23), and there is no indication which of these is the one that has survived. It is possible that al-Bāqillānī was closely following one of the others, and this might explain these differences from the extant version.

<sup>38</sup> Hayek, *ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī*, pp. 46–49.

Jubbā'ī and the convert from Christianity al-Ḥasan Ibn Ayyūb.<sup>39</sup> It must have been both well-known and popular in Muslim theological circles.

Another argument which al-Bāqillānī appears to have drawn from a common source is his rejection of the claim that Christ was divine because of the miraculous acts he performed, §§40–42. The refutation of this claim is one of the most often recurring in surviving polemical texts from the early centuries.<sup>40</sup> But within this tradition, the version found in the *Tamhīd* bears close resemblances to that in al-Māturīdī's *K. al-tawhīd* and to that in al-Ḥasan Ibn Ayyūb's *Radd*, as we have shown above.<sup>41</sup> All three authors know the same miracles of Jesus, and while al-Māturīdī and al-Ḥasan give remarkably close descriptions of the corresponding miracles of other prophets, al-Ḥasan and al-Bāqillānī know the same physiognomy of the serpent into which Moses' staff is transformed, including mouth, eyes and orifices, and also the same examples of Jesus' prayers to God. On the other hand, al-Bāqillānī's translation of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane is more or less identical to al-Māturīdī's, which differs from al-Ḥasan's.<sup>42</sup> Where al-Bāqillānī makes this common tradition his own is in his added emphasis on the agency of the miraculous action itself, which he argues is directly from God rather than the human prophet.

Differences between these three versions rule out any straightforward dependence, and presume a common source which is no longer known. Al-Bāqillānī's use of this source, together with the hypothetical source of Messianic proof-texts which we have suggested lies behind his concluding exegetical arguments in §§45–49, shows how well-informed he was about current anti-Christian arguments.

One final observation concerns al-Bāqillānī's overall attitude towards the doctrines he attacks, and the approach he takes in countering them. The earlier polemicist Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq, to whom he is deeply indebted, makes elaborate efforts to meet his opponents on their own ground: he carefully describes their beliefs as these are presented by the major denominations, and in all his arguments he only ever employs what may be called common-sense logic and comparisons between

<sup>39</sup> Cf. al-Nāshī, pp. 74–75, §35 above, al-Jubbā'ī in 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, pp. 250–253, §17 below, and al-Ḥasan Ibn Ayyūb in Ibn Taymiyya, *Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. II, pp. 353.21–54.13.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Thomas, 'Miracles of Jesus'.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. pp. 87–89.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Thomas, 'Miracles of Jesus', pp. 230–232.

one articulation and another to expose inconsistencies. But al-Bāqillānī seems rather less concerned about this attempted objectivity. As we have noted, he gives no description of doctrines, and barely describes a doctrine or term as he begins to discuss it. And he has little compunction, it seems, in employing the methods of his own Muslim *kalām* in his attack. *Kalām* concepts crop up in several places in this chapter, and maybe the most obvious is the opening discussion of God as substance, *jawhar*. While he begins by arguing in terms of the Christian presentation, and shows that the analogy Christians make between the known and unknown worlds can lead to awkward consequences (§§1–3), he quickly moves onto a characteristically *kalām* argument about accidents (§§4–5) and about substances according to the *kalām* definition as the fundamentals of composite bodies (§§6–7). It may be that by the time he was writing Muslims and Christians shared the same conceptual grammar, and so al-Bāqillānī was not presuming upon his opponents' thinking. But it seems more likely at this point that he has allowed his own definition of *jawhar* to invade the different definition of his Christian interlocutors. This is an indication of the ascendancy of Muslim theological thinking and the resultant lack of concern among Muslim thinkers about the niceties of debate. On the level of detail it matches the more general lack of concern about Christian doctrines within the context of Christian faith and the assumption that they can be analysed or interrogated in isolation from one another.

The *K. al-tamhīd* has come down in three manuscripts:<sup>43</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale arabe 6090, dated 472/1080, ب; Istanbul, Aya Sophia 2201, dated 478/1085, ص; and Istanbul, 'Atif Efendi 1223, dated 555/1160, ف. M.M. al-Khuḍayrī and M. 'A.-H. Abū Rīda's edition, *Al-tamhīd fī al-radd 'alā al-Mulhida wa-al-Mu'atṭila wa-al-Rāfiḍa wa-al-Khawārij wa-al-Mu'tazila*, Cairo, 1947, is based on the Paris MS alone; it contains the refutation of Christianity on pp. 78–96. Where its readings differ from our text, they are marked خ. R. McCarthy's edition, *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, Beirut, 1957, is based on all three MSS, with the refutation of Christianity on pp. 75–103.<sup>44</sup> This is a superb work of scholarship,

<sup>43</sup> Cf. McCarthy, *Tamhīd*, pp. 26–27 (Arabic introduction).

<sup>44</sup> There is a third edition by 'Imād al-Dīn Aḥmad Ḥaydar, Beirut, 1987, in which the refutation of Christianity appears on pp. 93–125.

and has been taken here as the basis of the edition that follows. It has been compared with the al-Khuḍayrī and Abū Rīda edition, and the occasional corrections to it and alternative readings followed here are indicated in the notes to the text, where it is marked م. We have also made slightly different paragraph divisions.





Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī

*Al-Radd ‘alā al-Naṣārā*  
*min*  
*Kitāb al-Tamhīd*

## باب الكلام على النصارى فى قولهم إن الله جوهر

١. يقال لهم: لِمَ قلتم إن الله سبحانه جوهر، وما دليلكم على ذلك؟  
فإن قالوا: الدليل على ذلك أننا وجدنا الأشياء كلها فى الشاهد والوجود  
لا تخلو من أن تكون جواهر أو أعراضاً. وقد اتفقنا على أن القديم ليس  
بعرض، فوجب أن يكون جوهرًا.  
أو قالوا: الدليل على ذلك أننا وجدنا الأشياء كلها لا تخرج عن قسمين:  
إما قائم بنفسه أو قائم بغيره. والقائم بغيره هو العرض، والقائم بنفسه هو  
الجوهر. فلما فسد من قولنا وقولكم أن يكون قائمًا بغيره وأن يكون عرضًا،  
ثبت أنه قائم بنفسه وأنه جوهر من الجواهر.

*The section of argument against the Christians  
concerning their teaching that God is a substance<sup>1</sup>*

1. Say to them: Why do you say that God, may he be praised, is a substance,<sup>2</sup> and what is your evidence for this?

If they say: The evidence for this is that we have discovered that all things in the observable and existent sphere are without exception substances or accidents.<sup>3</sup> We have determined that the eternal One is not an accident, so he must be a substance.

Or they may say: The evidence for this is that we have discovered that no thing can lie outside the two divisions of either subsisting through itself, or subsisting through something other than itself. That which subsists through something other than itself is an accident, and that which subsists through itself is a substance.<sup>4</sup> And since it is false according to both our teachings and yours that he should subsist through something other than himself and that he should be an accident, it is definite that he subsists through himself and is a substance.

---

<sup>1</sup> There is no general heading for the section against Christian doctrines, and unusually for a refutation of Christianity at this time no introductory description of beliefs.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Bāqillānī uses the term *jawhar* that has been familiar to Muslims and Arabic-speaking Christians for well over a century. The difference between his own definition, that a substance is a basic component of material objects that can be characterised by accidents, *Tamhūd*, pp. 17–18 §28, and the definition derived from Greek philosophy which is given by the Christians, that a substance is a self-subsistent entity, is the main point of contention in the ensuing discussion. For the general difference between the two, cf. Elias of Nisibis, from the fifth/eleventh century, in L. Cheikho, *Vingt traits théologiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens*, Beirut, 1920, p. 127; and 'Abdallah b. 'Umar al-Bayḍāwī and Maḥmūd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Iṣfahānī, from the seventh/thirteenth century, trans. E.E. Calverley and J.W. Pollock, *Nature, God and Man in Medieval Islam, 'Abd Allah Bayḍawī's text Tawālī' al-Anwar min Matalī' al-Anzar along with Mahmud Isfahānī's commentary Matalī' al-Anzar, Sharh Tawālī' al-Anwar (Islamic Philosophy and Science, texts and studies 45)*, Leiden, 2002, pp. 521–523.

<sup>3</sup> This inference is derived from *kalām* principles, though it is dubious whether any Christians who knew about them would make the mistake of drawing such an analogy between the phenomenal world and God. Al-Nāshī' al-Akbar, above pp. 72–73, §35 above, reports Christians drawing analogies, but nothing as simple and naïve as this.

<sup>4</sup> This is ultimately derived from Aristotelian principles, cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Book Z, trans. J. Warrington, London, 1956, pp. 169–170.

أو قالوا: الدليل على ذلك أننا وجدنا الأشياء كلها على ضربين: فضرب منها يصحّ منه الأفعال وهو الجوهر؛ وضرب يتعدّر ويمتنع منه الأفعال وهو العرض. فلما ثبت أن القديم فاعل وممن يتأتّى منه الأفعال ثبت أنه جوهر. أو قالوا: الدليل على ذلك أننا وجدنا الأشياء على ضربين: شريف، وهو الجوهر القائم بنفسه المستغني في الوجود عن غيره؛ وخسيس قائم بغيره ومحتاج إليه، وهو العرض. فلما لم يجز أن يكون القديم سبحانه من قبيل الخسيس ثبت أنه شريف وأنه قائم بنفسه.

2. فيقال لهم: لم زعتم أولاً أنكم، إذا لم تجدوا الأشياء في الشاهد إلا على ما وصفتهم، وجب القضاء على الغائب بمجرد الشاهد، وأن الموجود في الغائب لا ينفكّ من أجناس الموجودات في الشاهد؟ وما حجّتكم على ذلك؟ فإن الخلاف في جهة استدلالكم أعظم، والغلط والخطأ فيه أفحش.

3. ثمّ يقال لهم: فأنتم أيضاً لم تجدوا حادثاً إلاّ وقبله حادث، ولا شيئاً إلاّ من شيء، ولا جسمًا إلاّ وبعده جسم وفوقه جسم وتحتّه جسم ومن عن يمينه وشماله وتجاّاه وخلفه جسم. ولا وجدتم فاعلاً اخترع الأجسام وأحدث الأفعال بغير أدوات وآلات وجوارح وعلاج. فأقضوا بذلك على قديم العالم ونفي النهاية عنه، وأنّ الحوادث لا أول لها، وأنّ الأجسام لا كلّ لها ولا غاية، وأنّه لا إنسان إلاّ من نطفة ولا نطفة إلاّ من إنسان، ولا طائر

<sup>1</sup> ب في النص، وفي الهامش: حدّ.

Or they may say: The evidence for this is that we have discovered that all things are of two kinds, for one of which actions are feasible, and this is a substance, and for the other they are impossible and disallowed, and this is an accident. And since it is definite that the eternal One is an agent and is a being from whom actions may arise, it is definite that he is a substance.

Or they may say: The evidence for this is that we have discovered that things are of two kinds: noble, which is substance that subsists through itself, independent in existence of things other than it; and base, that subsists through something other than it and is dependent on it, which is accident. And since it is not right for the eternal One, may he be praised, to be of the mean sort, he must definitely be noble and subsisting by himself.

2. Say to them: Why do you claim in the first place that, because you have discovered that things in the observable sphere are only as you have described, judgement about the unseen must simply follow the observable sphere, and that what exists in the unseen cannot differ from the kinds of things that exist in the observable sphere? What is your argument for this?<sup>5</sup> The difference in respect of what you are trying to prove will be very great, and the error and mistake in it will be quite atrocious.<sup>6</sup>

3. Then say to them: Furthermore, you have never found any temporal thing without another before it, or any thing not from a thing, or any physical body without a body after it, above it, beneath it, to its left, to its right, in front of it and behind it. And you have never found an agent who makes bodies and performs actions without instruments, tools, limbs or use of medicine.<sup>7</sup> So, according to this judge that the world is eternal and deny it has a limit, that temporal things have no beginning, that physical bodies have no culmination or limit, that there is no human not from sperm or sperm not from a human, no bird not

---

<sup>5</sup> Al-Bāqillānī's response to the first Christian explanation predictably focuses on the obvious logical flaw they appear to have overlooked.

<sup>6</sup> This is the difference between the phenomenal and transcendental worlds.

<sup>7</sup> This counter-argument recalls al-Nāshī's similar argument, pp. 74–77, §35 above, that if the Christians draw analogies between God and created things in some respects they should do so in all respects.

إلا من بيضة ولا بيضة إلا من طائر،<sup>1</sup> أبداً إلى غير نهاية—وهذا لحق بأهل الدهر.

وكذلك فأقضوا على أنه لا فاعل لأجسام العالم، وأنّ الفاعل لأعراضه يفعلها بالآلات وأدوات. وأوجبوا على مَنْ نشأ في بلد الزنج، فلم يشاهد به ماءً إلاّ عذباً ولا إنساناً إلاّ أسود ولا زرعاً إلاّ أخضر، أن يقضي على أنه لا ماء<sup>2</sup> ولا إنسان<sup>3</sup> إلاّ<sup>4</sup> كما وجد وشاهد، حتى توجبوا<sup>5</sup> القضاء بالجهل الذي يُعلم بطلانه اضطراراً. فإن مرّوا على ذلك أجمع لحقوا بأهل الدهر والجهالات، وإن امتنعوا منه نقضوا استدلالهم.

4. ثمّ يقال لهم: أليس قد اتّفقنا على أنه لا موجود معلوم في الشاهد والمعقول إلاّ محدث موجود عن عدم؟

فإن قالوا: أجل؛ قيل لهم: فيجب أن يكون صانع العالم، جلّ ذكره، موجوداً محدثاً قياساً على الشاهد. فإن مرّوا على ذلك تركوا مذهبهم، وإن أبوه نقضوا دليلهم.

ثمّ يقال لهم: فهل وجدتم جوهرًا في الشاهد إلاّ متحيّزاً قابلاً للأعراض من جنس هذه الجواهر المعقول؟

فإن قالوا: لا؛ قيل لهم: فيجب عليكم، إذا كان القديم تعالى جوهرًا، أن يكون كالجواهر المعقولة ومن جنسها وقابلاً للأعراض كقبولها. فإن مرّوا على ذلك تركوا دينهم، وإن أبوه، قيل لهم: فما أنكرتم أن يكون القديم سبحانه موجوداً ليس بجوهر ولا عرض ولا كالموجودات في الشاهد كما أنه ليس كالجواهر؟ ولا فصل في ذلك أبداً.

<sup>1</sup>ب، ف || ص: ولا بيضة إلا من دجاجة ولا دجاجة إلا من بيضة. <sup>2</sup>ف || ب: إلا عذب؛ ص: إلا عذاب.  
<sup>3</sup>م: ولا إنسان [ولا زرع] إلا. <sup>4</sup>ب، ف || ص: أسود. <sup>5</sup>ص، ف || ب: يوجبوا.

from an egg and no egg not from a bird, for ever without end—this smacks of the supporters of eternity.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, judge that the physical bodies of the world have no maker, and that the maker of accidents makes them with tools and instruments. And compel someone who originates from the land of the Zanj, and has never seen there water that is not fresh, a human who is not black, or a plant that is not green, to judge that there is no water or human other than what he has found or seen, until you compel judgement in ignorance that is necessarily known to be futile.<sup>9</sup> If they allow all this they place themselves with the followers of fatalism and ignorance, and if they reject it they invalidate what they are trying to prove.

4. Then say to them: Have you not agreed with us that there is no existing and known thing in the observable and comprehensible sphere that is not temporal, existing from nothingness?

If they say: Of course; say to them: So it follows that the Maker of the world, great is the mention of him, exists as temporal by analogy with the observable sphere. If they allow this they abandon their belief, but if they deny it they invalidate their evidence.

Then say to them: Have you found a substance in the observable sphere that is not circumscribed and does not receive accidents, such as the kind of substances that are known?

If they say: No; say to them: So if the almighty eternal One is a substance, you must admit that he is like substances that are known, and of their kind, receiving accidents as they do. If they allow this they abandon their religion, and if they reject it, say to them: Why do you deny that the eternal One, blessed be he, exists and is not a substance or accident, and is not like things that exist in the observable sphere, just as he is not like substances? There can never be a rejection of this.

---

<sup>8</sup> On the basis of the reference in Q 45.24, the *Ahl al-dahr* are generally referred to by Muslim authors as proponents of a universe that is eternal, and determined by the impersonal force of time rather than an intentional Deity; heresiographers often categorise them with the philosophers. In such a universe with no beginning there could be no first sperm or human and no first egg or bird, but each one would eternally have issued from the other.

<sup>9</sup> With these few examples al-Bāqillānī shows the ridiculousness of the claim that what is not experienced can be modelled on what is, and thus that the nature of God can be modelled on the observable world.

5. ثمَّ يقال لهم على سائر أدلّتهم التي قدّمنا ذكرها: ما أنكرتم أن يكون القديم سبحانه حاملاً للأعراض بمثل كلِّ دليل ذكرتموه؟ وذلك أنا وجدنا الأشياء كلّها على ضربين: فضرب فعّال شريف قائم بنفسه ليس بعرض، وهو الحامل للأعراض؛ وضرب آخر ليس قائماً بنفسه ولا فعّالاً ولا شريفاً، وهو العرض. فلما ثبت أن القديم سبحانه فعّال قائم بنفسه شريف ليس بخسيس، ثبت أنّه حامل للأعراض ذو حيّز وشغل. فإن مروا على ذلك تركوا دينهم، وإن أبوه أبطلوا استدلالهم إبطالاً ظاهراً.

6. ثمَّ يقال لهم: إنكم قد أخطأتم أيضاً في قسمة الأشياء المعقولة الموجودة، لأنّ منها الفعّال الشريف القائم بنفسه الذي هو الجسم المؤلّف وليس بشيء واحد،<sup>1</sup> ومنها الشريف القائم بنفسه الذي هو الجوهر الذي ليس بمؤلّف. فلم أنكرتم أن يكون الباري سبحانه بجسماً؟ فإن قالوا: لأننا لم نعقل جسماً إلاّ متغايراً مؤثلاً مصوراً، وهذه الأمور من صفات الحدث، والباري سبحانه لا يجوز ذلك عليه، فبطل أن يكون جسماً؛ يقال لهم: فما أنكرتم أيضاً من استحالة كونه جوهرًا؟ لأننا لم نعقل جوهرًا إلاّ شاغلاً متحيّزاً قابلاً للحوادث من جنس هذه الجواهر. وهذه الأمور دالّة على حدث من جازت عليه. فلمّا لم يجوز أن يكون القديم سبحانه محدثاً، لم يجوز أن يكون جوهرًا.

7. فإن قالوا: الجوهر ضربان: شريف وخسيس، فالخسيس هو القابل للأعراض الذي يتحيّز<sup>2</sup> ويشغل المكان، والشريف هو ما لا يجوز ذلك عليه،

<sup>1</sup> ب || ص، ف: بشيء واحد. فلم أنكرتم أن. <sup>2</sup> خ: يتميّز.



5. Then say to them concerning the rest of their pieces of evidence which we have mentioned above: Why do you deny that the eternal One, blessed be he, may bear accidents, as in every piece of evidence you have mentioned? This is because we have found that all things are of two kinds: there is a kind that is an agent, noble, subsisting by itself, not an accident, and this bears accidents; and there is another kind which does not subsist by itself and is not an agent or noble, and it is an accident. And since it is established that the eternal One, blessed be he, is an agent, subsisting by himself, noble and not mean, it is clear that he bears accidents, and has confines and activity. If they allow this they abandon their religion, and if they reject it they invalidate what they are trying to prove in the most obvious manner.

6. Then say to them: You have also made a mistake in the division of known existing things. For among them is the noble agent, subsisting by itself, and this is the composite body which is not one thing, and among them is the noble thing that subsists by itself, and this is the substance which is not composite.<sup>10</sup> So why do you deny that the Creator, blessed be he, is a body?

If they say: Because we have no knowledge of a body that is not liable to change, composed and formed; such matters concern the attributes of the temporal, and they are not appropriate for the Creator, blessed be he, so his being a body is shown to be invalid; say to them: Then why in that case do you deny that it is impossible for him to be a substance? For we have no knowledge of a substance among the species of such substances that is not engaged, circumscribed, or receives temporal things. Such matters are indications of the temporal nature of the being to whom it applies. So since the eternal One, blessed be he, cannot be temporal, he cannot be a substance.

7. If they say: Substance is of two kinds, noble and mean. The mean is that which receives accidents, is circumscribed and occupies a location, while this cannot apply to the noble, so he must necessarily be a

---

<sup>10</sup> In the Ash'arī *kalām*, substances as basic units of material matter combined into physical bodies that were the objects known in the physical world; cf. *Tamhūd*, pp. 17–18, § 28; al-Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawālī' al-anwār*, p. 523. The Christian opponents would not accept the premise set out by al-Bāqillānī in this paragraph, because in their system God would be conceived of as the most rarefied substance, but according to the logic of his own theology his argument is cogent.

فوجب أنه جوهر غير متحيّز ولا قابل للأعراض؛ قيل لهم: ما أنكرتم أيضاً أن تكون الأجسام على ضرّيين؟ فجسم خسيس هو المتحيّز<sup>2</sup> القابل للصورة والتأليف والحوادث، وضرب شريف لا يقبل شيئاً من ذلك ولا يجوز عليه. والقديم سبحانه شريف فوجب أنه جسم ليس بذى صورة ولا مكان ولا قابل للأعراض. ولا جواب لهم عن شئ من ذلك.

### باب الكلام عليهم في الأقانيم

8. يقال لهم: لم زعمتم أن الله تعالى ثلاثة أقانيم دون أن تزعموا أنه أربعة وعشرة وأكثر من ذلك؟  
فإن قالوا: من قبل أنه قد ثبت أن الباري سبحانه موجود جوهر،<sup>3</sup> وثبت أنه حيّ وأنه عالم، فوجب أنه جوهر واحد ثلاثة أقانيم، منها الوجود<sup>4</sup> ومنها العلم ومنها الحياة. لأنّ الحيّ العالم لا يكون حيّاً عالمّاً حتّى يكون ذا حياة وعلم، فوجب وثبت أنّ الأقانيم ثلاثة؛ فيقال لهم: ما أنكرتم أن يكون الأقانيم أربعة؟ لأنّنا نقول إنّ القديم موجود حيّ عالم قادر، والقادر لا بدّ له من قدرة. فوجب أن يكون الأقانيم أربعة.

<sup>1</sup>خ: فوجب أن يكون غير متميّز. <sup>2</sup>خ: المتميّز. <sup>3</sup>ب، ف || ص: موجود وثبت أنه. <sup>4</sup>ص || ب: الجوهر الموجود؛ ف: الموجود الجوهر.

substance that is not circumscribed and does not receive accidents; say to them: Then why in that case do you deny that physical bodies are of two kinds? Thus, a mean body might be circumscribed, might receive form, composition and temporal things, and the noble kind would not receive any of these, and could not. The eternal One, blessed be he, is noble, so he must be a body without form or location and not receiving accidents. They have no answer to any of this.

*The section of argument against them concerning the hypostases*<sup>11</sup>

8. Say to them: Why do you claim that God almighty is three hypostases, but do not claim that he is four or ten or more than this?<sup>12</sup>

If they say: For the reason that it is established that the Creator, blessed be he, exists as substance; and it is established that he is living and knowing. So it necessarily follows that he is one substance and three hypostases, the existent One, Knowledge and Life.<sup>13</sup> This is because a living, knowing being is not living or knowing until he is the possessor of life and knowledge.<sup>14</sup> So it necessarily follows and is established that the hypostases are three; say to them: Why do you deny that the hypostases are four? For we say that the eternal One is existent, living, knowing and powerful, and one who is powerful must obviously have power. So it necessarily follows that the hypostases are four.

---

<sup>11</sup> Al-Bāqillānī employs the familiar term *uqnūm/aqānūm*, and evidently does not consider it necessary to explain or define it.

<sup>12</sup> This argument was well known from the early third/ninth century onwards; cf. pp. 74–75, §35 above, and pp. 250–253, §17 below. Whereas al-Bāqillānī could draw his opponents into distinctively Muslim theological issues over their claim that God is substance, here he adopts the method of replying to them according to their own principles.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. al-Nāshī' above, pp. 36–39, §1, where he somewhat differently reports Christians saying that the Father is the cause of the Son and Spirit, and also pp. 72–73, §35, where in a way similar to here he reports 'contemporaries' explaining that the Maker of the universe must have life and knowledge. Neither Muslim theologian seems able to make sense of the place of the substance in the Godhead.

<sup>14</sup> The equation of the qualities of living and knowing with the attributes of life and knowledge is distinctive of Ash'arī thinking, inherited from the early third/ninth century theologian 'Abdallāh Ibn Kullāb. It contrasts with the Mu'tazilī denial of attributes that could formally be identified separately from the being of God itself.

فإن قالوا: القدرة هي الحياة فهما أقنوم واحد؛ قيل لهم: فما أنكرتم أن يكون العلم هو الحياة، فوجب أن يكون الباري سبحانه أقنومين؟

9. فإن قالوا: قد ينقص العلم ويزيد<sup>1</sup> ويُعدم جملةً ويوجد، والحياة بحالها، فوجب أن يكون العلم ليس من معنى الحياة في شيء؛ قيل لهم: وكذلك قد تنقص<sup>2</sup> القدرة وتزيد وتُعدم جملةً وتوجد، والحياة بحالها، فوجب أن تكون القدرة غير الحياة وبخلاف معناها.

فإن قالوا: قد يبطل العلم جملةً في حال النوم والغشي، والإنسان حيٌّ؛ قيل لهم: وكذلك قد تبطل القدرة جملةً حتى لا يقدر الإنسان على تحريك يده أو لسانه<sup>3</sup> أو أنما بعض جوارحه وهو حيٌّ في تلك الحال، فوجب أن تكون القدرة غير الحياة وأن الأقانيم أربعة.

فإن قالوا: دخول حرف المبالغة في صفة العالم في قولنا "عالم" و "أعلم منه"، واستحالة المبالغة في صفة الحي، والتفضيل بين الحيين دليل على أن العلم ليس من الحياة في شيء؛ قيل لهم: فقولوا لأجل هذا بعينه إن القدرة غير الحياة، لأننا قد نبالغ في صفة القادر ونقول "قادر" و "أقدر منه" ولا نقول "حي" و "أحيا منه"، فوجب أن تكون القدرة غير الحياة.

10. وكذلك يقال لهم: ما أنكرتم أن يكون الأقانيم خمسة وعشرة؟ لأننا نقول: إن الباري موجود حيٌّ عالم قادر، ونقول: إنه مريد وباق وسميع وبصير ومتكلم. والباقي السميع البصير المتكلم المريد لا يكون كذلك إلا لوجود بقاء وإرادة وسمع وبصر وكلام.

<sup>1</sup> ص || ب، ف: ويوجد ويُعدم والحياة باقية بحالها. <sup>2</sup> ب، ف || ص: تزيد وتنقص. <sup>3</sup> ب || ص: لسانه وإنما يومية ببعض جوارحه؛ ف: لسانه أو يومية ببعض جوارحه.

If they say: Power is life,<sup>15</sup> so they are one hypostasis; say to them: So why do you deny that knowledge is life, so that the Creator, blessed be he, would then necessarily be two hypostases?

9. If they say: Knowledge can decrease and increase, disappear altogether and reappear, but definitely not life, so it necessarily follows that knowledge does not have the signification of life at all;<sup>16</sup> say to them: But in the same way power can decrease and increase, can disappear altogether and reappear, but definitely not life. So it follows that power is other than life, with a different signification.

If they say: Knowledge can cease altogether in the condition of sleep and unconsciousness, though the person is living; say to them: In the same way power can cease altogether so that a person has no power to move his hand or tongue or a single one of his limbs, although he is still living in this condition. So it necessarily follows that power is other than life, and that the hypostases are four.

If they say: The attribute 'knowing' can be used comparatively, as we say 'knowing' and 'more knowledgeable than him'. But the impossibility of using the attribute 'living' comparatively or of making one thing more living than another is evidence that knowledge is in no way life; say to them: So say that because of this very thing power is other than life, because we can talk comparatively about the attribute 'powerful', and say 'powerful' and 'more powerful than him', and cannot say 'living' and 'more living than him'. So it necessarily follows that power is other than life.

10. In the same way say to them: Why do you deny that the hypostases are five or ten? For we say: The Creator is existent, living, knowing and powerful, and we say: He is willing, everlasting, hearing, seeing and articulating. And the everlasting, seeing, articulating, willing One cannot be thus without the existence of everlastingness, will, hearing, sight and speech.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī's account of Christian doctrines below, pp. 226–227, §1, where he reports the same identification.

<sup>16</sup> If al-Bāqillānī is reporting a real Christian explanation here, it may be a popularised and debased form of the kind of argument promoted in the early third/ninth century by 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, *Burhān*, pp. 52–53, who explains that life and knowledge are essential attributes in beings, and that there is a clear difference between the two.

<sup>17</sup> This is a simple statement of the Ash'arī position on the divine attributes, that God's qualities derive from attributes in his essence.

فإن قالوا: البقاء هو هو؛ قيل لهم: والحياة والعلم هما هو، فقولوا إنه أقنوم واحد.

فإن قالوا: الكلام والإرادة فعل من أفعال المتكلم المريد؛ قيل لهم: وكذلك العلم فعل من أفعال العالم، فقولوا إنه أقنومان.

فإن قالوا: قد يعلم بالعلم من لم يفعل؛ قيل لهم: وقد يريد بالإرادة من لم يفعلها ويتكلم بالكلام من لم يفعل.

وكذلك إن قالوا: سمع الباري سبحانه وبصره هو نفس علمه، فوجب أنهما ليسا بأقنومين غير العلم؛ قيل لهم: وكذلك علم الباري سبحانه هو حياته، فوجب أنه تعالى أقنومان. ولا جواب لهم عن شيء من ذلك.

II. وإن قال منهم قائل: القنومية إنما تثبت للباري بصفة ترجع إلى نفسه لا تعلق لها بغيره، وكونه<sup>1</sup> موجوداً وجوهرًا يرجع إلى نفسه، وكونه حيًا يرجع إليه ولا تعلق له بغيره، وكونه عالمًا بنفسه يرجع<sup>2</sup> إلى نفسه وإنما له أقنوم بكونه عالمًا بنفسه لا بغيره؛ قيل له: وكذلك هو قديم بنفسه وليس

<sup>1</sup>ص، ف || ب: وهي كونه. <sup>2</sup>ص، ف || ب: بنفسه صفة يرجع بها إلى.

If they say: Everlastingness is him himself; say to them: Life and knowledge are both him himself, so say that he is one hypostasis.<sup>18</sup>

If they say: Speech and will are actions of one who is articulating and willing; say to them: In the same way knowledge is among the actions of one who is knowing, so say that he is two hypostases.<sup>19</sup>

If they say: Someone who cannot act may know by knowledge; say to them: Someone may will by will who cannot carry it out, and can articulate by speech who cannot perform it.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly if they say: The Creator's, blessed be he, hearing and seeing are his knowledge itself, so it follows that they are not two hypostases other than knowledge; say to them: In the same way, the Creator's, blessed be he, knowledge is his life, so it necessarily follows that the almighty One is two hypostases. They have no answer to any of this.

11. If one of them says: The hypostatic nature of the Creator is established by there being an attribute that derives from his essence and is not attached to him by something other than himself. And his being existent and substance derives from himself, and his being living derives from himself and it is not attached to him by something other than himself, and his being knowing by himself derives from himself, and he has a hypostasis only by virtue of his being knowing by himself and not by anything other than himself;<sup>21</sup> say to him: In the same way he

---

<sup>18</sup> The Christians allude here to a long-running disagreement in *kalām*, whether God is eternal of himself or by virtue of an attribute of eternity. For the different position of Muslim theologians on this just before al-Bāqillānī's time, cf. al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 180. In suggesting that everlastingness is identical with God's essence, the Christians evidently distinguish this from God's other attributes. But al-Bāqillānī reminds them that, at least in his system of reasoning, attributes are formally identical with God's essence and so they cannot make this distinction.

<sup>19</sup> The Christians attempt to draw a distinction between God's essential attributes and active attributes, but al-Bāqillānī easily traps them in inconsistency.

<sup>20</sup> Their further attempt to distinguish between the status of attributes proves vain: they try to suggest that the attribute of knowledge may not be related to action, but al-Bāqillānī shows that the same applies to the attributes of will and speech.

<sup>21</sup> The Christians appear here to draw a distinction between the hypostases in their own Trinitarian model of God and the attributes in the Ash'arī model. Whereas in the latter God's qualities derived from attributes that had an existence that was formally different from the essence of God, although not distinct from it (*lā hiya huwa wa-lā hiya ghayruh*), in the formula of al-Ash'arī's predecessor Ibn Kullāb), in an analogous way to contingent beings (though with the important distinction that their attributes were accidental whereas God's were eternal in his essence), in the former his qualities derive from his actual being. This is unique to him, and is what gives him his hypostatic nature.

كلّ موجود جوهرًا قديمًا بنفسه، فوجب أن يكون كونه قديمًا أقنومًا رابعًا. وكذلك<sup>1</sup> هو شئ موجود بنفسه وجوهر بنفسه، فيجب أن يكون كونه شيئًا موجودًا أقنومًا وكونه جوهرًا أقنومًا، لأنّه ليس كلّ موجود جوهرًا. وكذلك كونه باقياً صفة ترجع إلى<sup>2</sup> نفسه لا تعلق لها بغيره. وليس كلّ موجود باقياً، فوجب أن يكون كونه باقياً أقنومًا خامساً. ولا جواب لهم عن ذلك، وفيه ترك التثليث.

### مسئلة عليهم في الأقانيم

12. يقال لهم: خبرونا عن الجوهر العامّ الجامع للأقانيم الذي هذه الأقانيم أقانيم له، أهو عندكم الأقانيم أم غيرها؟ فإن قالت اليعقوبية والنسطورية: ليس الجوهر بغير الأقانيم؛ قيل لهم: أفليس الجوهر غير مختلف من حيث كان جوهرًا، ومن حيث لم يكن<sup>3</sup> معدودًا، ومن حيث لم يكن<sup>4</sup> خواصّ متباينة المعنى؟

فإن قالوا: أجل—وهو قولهم؛ قيل لهم: أفليس الأقانيم مختلفة من حيث هي خواصّ متباينة المعنى، ومن حيث هي معدودة، ومن حيث هي أقانيم، ومن حيث أن الابن منها تدرّع واتّحد بجسد المسيح، عليه السلام، دون الروح؟ فإن قالوا: نعم—ولا بدّ من ذلك؛ قيل لهم: فإذا كان الجوهر هو الأقانيم، والأقانيم مختلفة معدودة متباينة في الاختصاص ومنها المتّحد،<sup>5</sup> وهي نفس الجوهر، فنفس الجوهر إذاً مختلفة معدودة متباينة المعنى متّحدة بناسوت المسيح، عليه السلام. فيجب أن يكون نفس الجوهر الذي ليس بمعدود

<sup>1</sup>ص، ف || ب: وكذلك كونه باقياً صفة هو شئ. <sup>2</sup>ف || ب: موجود جوهرًا يرجع الى نفسه؛ ص: موجود جوهرًا. ولا جواب لهم. <sup>3</sup>ب، ف || ص: حيث كان معدودًا. <sup>4</sup>ب: حيث لم تكن له خواص؛ ص: حيث كان خواص؛ ف: بدون نقط. <sup>5</sup>ب، ف || ص: المتحد فيه.



is eternal by himself, and not every existent thing is a substance eternal by itself, so it necessarily follows that his being eternal is a fourth hypostasis.<sup>22</sup>

In the same way he is a thing that is an existent by himself and is a substance by himself. So it follows that his being is a thing, existent and hypostasis, and his being is a substance and hypostasis. For not every existent is a substance. In the same way his being everlasting is an attribute that derives from himself, and is not attached to it by something other than him. And not every existent is everlasting. So it follows that his being everlasting is a fifth hypostasis.

They have no answer to this, and it means abandoning the Trinity.

*A question against them concerning the hypostases*

12. Say to them: Tell us about the common substance that combines the hypostases and of which the hypostases are hypostases, in your view is it the hypostases or other than them?<sup>23</sup>

If the Jacobites and Nestorians say: The substance is not other than the hypostases;<sup>24</sup> say to them: Is not the substance undifferentiated because it is substance, and because it is uncountable, and because it is not particularities which are diverse in significance?

If they say: Of course—and this is their teaching; say to them: Are not the hypostases differentiated because they are particularities which are diverse in significance, because they are countable, because they are hypostases, and because the Son among them, though not the Spirit, put on<sup>25</sup> and united with the body of Christ, peace be upon him?

If they say: Yes—and they have to; say to them: So if the substance is the hypostases, and the hypostases are differentiated, countable, and diverse in competences, with one of them uniting, and they are the substance itself, then the substance itself is therefore differentiated, countable, diverse in significance and united with the human nature of Christ, peace be upon him. So it follows that the substance itself,

<sup>22</sup> Undaunted by what the Christians say, al-Bāqillānī applies the logic of his opponents' statement to show that the three hypostases model cannot be sustained.

<sup>23</sup> Many of al-Bāqillānī's arguments from this point show close similarities to arguments in Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq's *Radd 'alā al-thalāth firaq min al-Naṣārā*.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Abū 'Īsā in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 66–67 § 1.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 88–89 (and n. 6, p. 245), where the eighth form *iddara'a* is employed.

ولا مختلف ولا متّحد ولا متباين المعنى هو نفس المختلف المعداد المتباين المعنى المتّحد. وهذا جهل ممن صار إليه، وليس ذلك من قولهم في الجوهر. ولا خلاص لهم منه.

13. وإن قالت الملكية منهم، وهم الروم: إنّ الجوهر غير الأقانيم؛ قيل لهم: فإذا كان الجوهر إلهًا والأقانيم الثلاثة آلهة وهي غيره، فالإله إذاً أربعة، جوهر وثلاثة أقانيم غيره؛ وهذا يبطل قولكم بالتثليث. وإن قالوا: الإله ثلاثة أقانيم، والرابع جوهر ليس بإله غير الثلاثة؛ قيل لهم: فلا فرق إذاً بين قولنا "الأقانيم ثلاثة ولا جوهر هناك يجمعها وتكون له"<sup>1</sup> وبين قولنا "إنّ هناك ثلاثة أقانيم وجوهرًا جامعًا لها"، فيجب أن يكون وجود الرابع كعدمه وإثباته كنفية. وهذا تجاهل ممن صار إليه.

14. ويقال لهم أيضاً: إن جاز أن يكون الرابع مع الثلاثة ثلاثة فقط، فما أنكرتم أن يكون الروح والعلم مع الإله الموجود واحداً فقط وأن يكون أقنومًا واحداً، ولا يكون الثاني والثالث شيئاً يزيد على الواحد كما لم يكن الرابع شيئاً يزيد على الثالث؟ فتكون الثلاثة الأقانيم هي جوهر واحد كما كانت الأربعة التي منها الجوهر ثلاثة. ولا جواب عن ذلك.

<sup>1</sup> ب || ص: ويكون له؛ ف: وتكون الخواص له.

which is uncountable, undifferentiated, not united and not diverse in significance, is itself differentiated, countable, diverse in significance and united. Whoever concludes on this shows ignorance, and though it is not their teaching about the substance they have no rescue from it.<sup>26</sup>

13. If the Melkites among them, the Byzantines, say: The substance is other than the hypostases;<sup>27</sup> say to them: So if the substance is divine, and the three hypostases are divine, and they are other than it, then the Divinity is thus four, substance and three hypostases other than it. This invalidates your teaching about the Trinity.<sup>28</sup>

If they say: The Divinity is three hypostases, and the fourth is substance which is not divine other than the three; say to them: So there is then no difference between us saying, 'The hypostases are three and there is no substance there combining them and possessing them', and us saying, 'There are three hypostases and a substance which combines them'. So it follows that the existence of the fourth is like its non-existence, and affirming it is like denying it. This is benightedness on the part of whoever concludes on it.<sup>29</sup>

14. Say to them further: If it is possible for the fourth, together with the three, to be three and no more, why do you deny that the Spirit and Knowledge together with the existent Divinity are one and no more, that he is one hypostasis, and that the second and third are not a thing in addition to the One, as the fourth is not a thing in addition to the third? Then the three hypostases will be one substance, just as the four of which the substance is one are three.<sup>30</sup> There is no reply to this.

---

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 76–77, where the outlines of the argument and the key terminology are identical.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66–67 §2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80–83 §§31–32.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102–109 §65. Al-Bāqillānī gives the essence of what in Abū ʿĪsā is a long winding argument.

<sup>30</sup> Applying the simple logic of the case, al-Bāqillānī alludes to his earlier point about the reduction of hypostases in §§8ff. He refuses to allow the kind of subtleties demanded in the Christian claim that God as substance is not different from God as hypostases, and therefore that the divine substance is not a fourth constituent of the Godhead. His point is that if the substance can be referred to it must be fully existent and so identifiable separately from the hypostases, making it a fourth member of the Godhead.

وكذلك يقال لهم ولليعقوبيّة والنسطوريّة في قولهم ”إنّ الأب إله وإنّ الابن إله وإنّ الروح إله وإنّ الإله مع ذلك واحد“: لأنّه إذا كان كلّ واحد منهم إلهاً فهم ثلاثة آلهة، ولا<sup>1</sup> معنى لقولهم ”إله واحد“، وهم قد جعلوا الإلهيّة لكلّ واحد منهم.

### مسئلة أخرى على الملكيّة

15. ويقال لهم: خبرونا عن الجوهر الذي هو عندكم غير الأقانيم، أهو مع ذلك موافق لها أم مخالف لها؟

فإن قالوا: إنّّه موافق لها؛ قيل لهم: فيجب أن يكون أقنوماً<sup>2</sup> مثلها، وأن يكون الجوهر ابناً من حيث وافق الابن، وأن يكون روحاً من حيث وافق الروح، وأن يكون أقنوماً وخاصاً لجوهر آخر خامس كما أن الأقانيم خواصّ لجوهر. ويجب أيضاً أن تكون نفسه متباينة المعنى مختلفة من حيث أشبهت أقانيم مختلفة المعاني، وأن يكون ابن نفسه وروح نفسه لأنّه مثل ابنه وروحه بمعناها. وهذا جهل عظيم وترك لقولهم إن صاروا إليه.

16. وإن قالوا: ليس الجوهر موافقاً للأقانيم من كلّ جهة<sup>3</sup> وإنّما يوافقها بالجوهريّة لأنّ جوهرها من جوهره، وإنّما يخالفها في القنوميّة؛ قيل لهم: فالجهة التي وافقها بها، وهي الجوهريّة، هي الجهة التي خالفها بها، وهي القنوميّة. فإن قالوا: نعم؛ جعلوا معنى الجوهريّة هو معنى القنوميّة. وقيل لهم: فما أنكرتم أن يكون الجوهر أقنوماً لجوهر آخر ولنفسه؟—وذلك

<sup>1</sup> ب || ص، ف، م: فلا. <sup>2</sup> ص، ف || ب، م: أقانيم. <sup>3</sup> تنص || ف: وجه.

Say the same to them and the Jacobites and Nestorians about their teaching: 'The Father is divine, the Son is divine and the Spirit is divine, though the Divinity is nevertheless one'. For if every one of them is divine they are three divinities, and there is no meaning to their teaching 'one Divinity' as long as they confer divinity upon each of them.

*Another question against the Melkites*

15. Now say to them: Tell us about the substance which in your view is other than the hypostases, is it nevertheless identical with them or distinct from them?<sup>31</sup>

If they say: It is identical with them; say to them: Then it must be a hypostasis like them, and the substance must be Son since it is identical with the Son, and Spirit since it is identical with the Spirit, and a hypostasis and property of another substance, a fifth,<sup>32</sup> just as the hypostases are properties of a substance. It also follows that it itself will be diverse in significance and differentiated because it resembles hypostases differentiated in significances, and will be Son itself and Spirit itself, because it is like its Son and Spirit in their significances.<sup>33</sup> This is the height of ignorance and an abandonment of their teaching, if they conclude on it.

16. And if they say: The substance is not identical with the hypostases in every respect but is only identical with them in substantiality, because their substance is from its substance, though it is different from them in hypostaticity; say to them: So the respect in which it is identical with them—substantiality—is the respect in which it is different from them—hypostaticity. If they say: Yes, they make the meaning of substantiality the meaning of hypostaticity.<sup>34</sup>

Say to them: Why do you deny that the substance is a hypostasis to another substance and to itself?—this is an abandonment of their

---

<sup>31</sup> Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 82–83 §33.

<sup>32</sup> Just as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are hypostases of the substance, the substance, if it is identical with them, must also be a hypostasis of a substance, making this latter a fifth member of the Godhead.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 82–83 §35.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88–89 §45.

ترك قولهم. وإن قالوا: جهة الاختلاف بينهما، وهي القنوميّة، غير جهة الاتفاق التي هي الجوهرية؛ قيل لهم: فيجب أن يكون هناك خلاف ثابت بين الجوهر والأقانيم في القنوميّة وأن يكون ذلك الخلاف لا يعدو أن يكون جوهرًا أو قنومًا.<sup>1</sup> وإلاّ وجب أن يوافقها بنفسه في الجوهرية ويخالفها بنفسه في القنوميّة. وإن جاز ذلك، جاز أن يكون وفاق الشئيين هو خلافهما وأن يكون قدمه هو حدوثه وأن يكون قديمًا بنفسه محدثًا بنفسه. وفي فساد ذلك دليل على بطلان ما قالوه.

17. فإن قال منهم قائل: أفليس قد قلتم أنتم في صفات الباري سبحانه إنها ليست بموافقة له ولا مخالفة له؟ فما أنكرتم أيضاً أن يكون الجوهر غير موافق للأقانيم ولا مخالف لها؟ قيل لهم: إنّما سألناكم عن هذا لأجل قولكم إن الجوهر غير الأقانيم. ونحن فلا نقول إن الله، عزّ وجلّ، غير صفاته، فلا يلزم ما قلتم. وعلى أنّنا لو قلنا إن الله تعالى مخالف لصفاته في معناها بمعنى أنّه يجوز عليه ما يستحيل عليها وأنّه لا يسدّ مسدها ولا ينوب منابها، لم يدخل علينا مثل ما لزمكم من كون المتفق بنفسه مختلفاً بنفسه وكون جهة الاتفاق هي جهة الاختلاف. لأنّنا لا نزعم أنّ الله سبحانه موافق لصفاته من جهة من الجهات. وأنتم تزعمون أنّ الجوهر موافق للأقانيم بالجوهريّة،

<sup>1</sup>ص || ت، ف: عرضا.

teaching. If they say: The respect of differentiation between the two, which is hypostaticity, is other than the respect of identity, which is substantiality; say to them: Then in this case it follows that there is a definite difference between the substance and the hypostases with regard to hypostaticity, and that this difference amounts to no more than that there is substance and hypostasis.<sup>35</sup> If not, it must follow that it is identical with them of itself in substantiality and is different from them of itself in hypostaticity. But if this is allowed, then it must be allowed that the identity of the two things is the difference between them, that his eternity is his temporality, and that he is eternal of himself and temporal of himself. The unsoundness of this provides evidence for the falseness of what they teach.

17. If one of them says: But do you yourselves not say about the attributes of the Creator, blessed be he, that they are not identical with him nor different from him?<sup>36</sup> So then why do you deny that the substance is not identical with the hypostases and not different from them? Say to them: We have only asked you about this because of your teaching that the substance is other than the hypostases. We ourselves do not say that God, great and mighty, is other than his attributes, so what you say is not constraining. But if we were to say that God almighty was different from his attributes in their significance in the sense that what applied to him was impossible for them and that he could not replace them or be their substitute, we would not be bound by the kind of thing that applies to you, such as his being identical through himself and differentiated through himself, and the respect of identity being the same as differentiation. For we do not claim that God, blessed be he, is identical with his attributes in any respect. But you claim that the substance is identical with the hypostases in substantiality, and is thus identical with them through itself, and is

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89–91 §50.

<sup>36</sup> Whoever this unnamed Christian is, assuming he is not just a convenient *persona* whom al-Bāqillānī uses to clarify the distinction between his own Ashʿarī position and Christianity, he knows enough about Muslim attributes doctrine to try to turn the tables on al-Bāqillānī. His words here recall the formula that was accepted by al-Asharī and his followers, that the attributes are neither God nor other than him, *lā hiya huwa wa-lā hiya ghayruh*.

فإنّه موافق لها بنفسه ومخالف لها أيضاً في القنوميّة بنفسه. فشتان بين قولنا وقولكم.

18. وإن قالوا: لا نقول إنّّه موافق لها ولا مخالف لها؛ قيل لهم: فإنّه لا بدّ أن يسدّ مسدّها فيوافقها أو لا يسدّ مسدّها فيخالفها. وهذا المعنى نفسه هو الذي نعنيه بالاتّفاق والاختلاف، فلا معنى للمراوغة. وإن قالوا: أليس لا يقال إن يد الإنسان من الإنسان مخالفة له ولا موافقة له، وكذلك الواحد من العشرة والبيت من القصيدة والآية من السورة؟ فما أنكرتم من مثل ذلك في الجوهر والأقانيم؟ قيل لهم: إنّما لم يجز إطلاق الخلاف والوفاق فيما ذكرتم، لأنّ قولنا "إنسان" واقع على الجملة التي منها اليد، وكذلك العشرة والواحد منها، والبيت والقصيدة، والآية والسورة. ومن المحال أن يكون الشئ مثل نفسه وغيره أو خلاف نفسه وغيره. وقولنا "جوهر" ليس بواقع عندكم على الجوهر والأقانيم التي هي خواصّه، ولا من أسماء الجُمُل. فسقط ما سألتكم عنه.



also different from them in hypostaticity through itself. So there is something of a difference between our teaching and yours.<sup>37</sup>

18. If they say: We do not say that it is identical with them or different from them; say to them: Then it must be able to stand in place of them and so be identical with them, or not stand in place of them and be different from them. This is the very meaning of what we intend by identity and differentiation. For there is no meaning to trickery.

If they say: Cannot it be said that a person's hand, which is the person's, is neither different from him nor identical with him, and similarly, that one is part of ten, the line part of the poem, the verse part of the chapter? So why do you deny this with regard to the substance and the hypostases?<sup>38</sup> Say to them: Simply because difference and identity cannot be employed in a broad sense in what you refer to. For our term 'human' applies to the whole of which the hand is part, and similarly ten and one as part of it, the line and the poem, the verse and the chapter. It is impossible for the thing to be like itself and not, or different from itself and not. Our term 'substance' does not, in your view, apply to the substance and the hypostases, which are its particularities and are not nouns with general intent. So the point you raise collapses.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> It is by no means clear whether al-Bāqillānī succeeds in defending the difference he says exists between his own *madhhab* and the Christians. He tries to say that Ash'arī doctrine does not refer to the divine attributes in such a way that they could be understood as distinct from the essence of God or identical with it. But he does not elaborate enough to make it clear whether the attributes have a real existence or not. Thus the difference between him and his opponents seems to be little more than verbal, since both sides identify the being of God, whether substance or essence, and also the hypostases or attributes, and both try to suggest that there is both identity and distinction between them. What al-Bāqillānī seems to take as the material difference between himself and them is that in his theology the attributes are determinants that endow the essence of God with certain qualities but cannot be said to be God, while in their theology the hypostases are God himself just as the substance is. But it is unclear how far this difference is real when it comes to the minutiae of argument that are involved here.

<sup>38</sup> Abū 'Īsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 94–95 §58.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Bāqillānī's response is that the comparison is invalid because the other relationships involve parts and wholes, such as a hand and the whole person, which is not the case with the substance and hypostases. Cf. Abū 'Īsā's reply, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 94–97 §58, which is a much longer and less precise version of the argument here.

### باب ذكر اختلافهم في معنى قولهم "الأقانيم"

19. وقد زعم قوم منهم أن معنى الأقانيم، التي هي الخواص، أنها صفات للجوهر؛ فيقال لهم: إذا استحال أن تكون أقانيم وخواص لأنفسها، فإنها<sup>1</sup> تكون صفات وأقانيم لشيء آخر هو غيرها ولا يقال له إنه هي، وهذا<sup>2</sup> يوجب إثبات أربعة معان منها جوهر وثلاثة خواص له. وهذا ترك التثليث. وإن قالوا: هي خواص لأنفسها وأقانيم لأنفسها؛ قيل لهم: فيجب أن يكون الابن ابن نفسه والروح روح نفسه والصفة صفة نفسها، وهذا جهل عظيم، ويجب بطلان ما هي خواص له ونفيه، وألا يكون هناك مخصوص بهذا الخواص. وهذا إبطال للجوهر.

20. وزعم قوم منهم أن معنى الأقانيم والخواص أنها أشخاص؛ فيقال لهم: أهي<sup>3</sup> أشخاص لأنفسها أم لجوهر يجمعها؟ فإن قالوا: لأنفسها، تركوا قولهم؛ وإن قالوا: لجوهر جامع لها، أبطلوا التثليث. وقال بعضهم: معنى الأقانيم أنها خواص فقط؛ فيقال لهم: أهي<sup>4</sup> خواص لأنفسها أم لجوهر جامع لها هي خواص له؟ ويكلمون في ذلك بما كلّمنا به من زعم أنها أشخاص وصفات. ولا جواب لهم عن ذلك.

### مسئلة أخرى عليهم في الأقانيم

21. ويقال لهم: إذا كانت الأقانيم جوهرًا واحدًا، وكان الأب جوهره جوهر الابن، وجوهر الروح من جوهرهما، فلم كان الابن والروح بأن يكونا ابناً وروحاً خاصين للأب أولى من أن يكون كل واحد منهما أباً، وأن يكون

<sup>1</sup>ص، ف || ب: وإنما. <sup>2</sup>ص، ف || ب: فهذا. <sup>3</sup>ب || ص، ف: فهي. <sup>4</sup>ب || ص، ف، م: أفهي.

*The section of the account of their disagreement  
over the meaning of their term 'hypostases'<sup>40</sup>*

19. People among them have claimed that the meaning of the hypostases, which are the particularities, is that they are attributes of the substance. Say to them: If it is impossible for them to be hypostases and particularities to themselves, then they must be hypostases to something else which is other than them, and this cannot be said to be them. This necessitates affirming four entities, a substance having three particularities. This is an abandonment of the Trinity.

If they say: They are particularities of themselves and hypostases of themselves; say to them: Then the Son must be son of himself, the Spirit spirit of itself, and an attribute attribute of itself. This is the height of ignorance, and it must be an invalidation and denial of what they are particularities to, for it could not then be particularised by these particularities. This is a proof against the substance.

20. People among them claim that the meaning of the hypostases and particularities is that they are individuals. Say to them: Are they individuals to themselves or to a substance that combines them?

If they say: To themselves, they abandon their teaching; and if they say: To a substance that combines them, they disprove the Trinity.

Some of them say: The meaning of the hypostases is that they are particularities and no more. Say to them: Are they particularities to themselves or to a substance that combines them, of which they are particularities? In this they talk in the way we have talked about the person who claims that they are individuals and attributes. They have no reply to this.<sup>41</sup>

*Another question to them on the hypostases*

21. Say to them: If the hypostases are one substance, and the Father's substance is the substance of the Son, and the substance of the Spirit is the substance of both of them, then why are the Son and Spirit, in that they are Son and Spirit, particularities of the Father, rather than each of them being Father and the Father a particularity to

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 68–69 §8.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172–181 §§ 141–150.

الأب خاصاً لهما؟ إذا كان الابن والروح جوهريْن لأنفسهما وكان جوهريهما من جوهر الأب، وكان الأب جوهراً لنفسه وكان قديماً لنفسه، وكانا أيضاً قديمين لأنفسهما، ولم يكن الأب قبل الأقانيم والخواص ولا أسبق في الوجود، ولا الخواص أسبق منه، فما الذي جعله بأن يكون أباً لهما أولى من أن يكون كل واحد منهما أباً لما جعلتموه أباً له، وأن يكون الأب خاصاً؟ فلا يجدون إلى تصحيح تحكّمهم سبيلاً.

### باب الكلام عليهم في معنى الاتحاد

22. وقد اختلفت عباراتهم عن معنى الاتحاد، فقال كثير منهم: معنى الاتحاد أن الكلمة التي هي الابن حلّت جسد المسيح. وقال كثير منهم: <sup>1</sup> إن الاتحاد هو إختلاط وامتزاج. وزعمت اليعقوبية أن كلمة الله انقلبت لحماً ودماً بالاتحاد. وزعم كثير منهم،

<sup>1</sup>ص، ف || ب: وقالت طائفة أخرى وهم اليعاقبة.

them?<sup>42</sup> If the Son and the Spirit are substances by themselves and their substance is of the substance of the Father, and the Father is a substance by himself and is eternal by himself, and they are also eternal by themselves, and the Father is not before the hypostases or particularities, nor prior in existence, and the particularities are not prior to him, then what is it that makes him Father to them any more than that each of them should be a father to what you make it father of, with the Father a particularity? They will not find a way of correcting their arbitrariness.<sup>43</sup>

*The chapter of argument against them on the meaning of the Uniting*

22. Their explanations of the meaning of the Uniting vary.<sup>44</sup>

Most of them say: The meaning of the Uniting is that the Word, who is the Son, inhered in the body of Christ. And most of them say: The Uniting was mingling and mixing.

The Jacobites claim that the Word of God was transformed into flesh and blood through the Uniting.

---

<sup>42</sup> Al-Bāqillānī could have found these discrepant descriptions in Abū ʿĪsā; Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 66–67 §§5–6. But since the model of the Son and Holy Spirit being caused by the Father is also known to al-Nāshiʾ al-Akbar, above pp. 36–39 §1, he may equally have found it elsewhere. Abū ʿĪsā in his refutation does not draw attention to the inconsistency.

<sup>43</sup> Here al-Bāqillānī draws attention to an inconsistency in the doctrine that arises from the hypostases apparently being equal in the substance but also hierarchically ordered.

<sup>44</sup> This list of metaphorical explanations bears a close resemblance to the one given by Abū ʿĪsā, Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 88–89 §11. Both lists give the same seven variations. But there are differences as well, and these suggest there was no direct dependence. In the first place, the order differs slightly, and in the second al-Bāqillānī gives rather fuller explanations than does Abū ʿĪsā: compare his last, attributed to an unnamed individual, with Abū ʿĪsā's fifth, p. 88. 8–10. More significantly, in the third place al-Bāqillānī's list attributes some explanations to particular denominations and also begins by drawing a broad distinction between the less and more intimate forms of Uniting favoured by the Jacobites and others. So either he has given Abū ʿĪsā's list more precise form, which would be in line with his general treatment of his predecessor, or he is drawing upon an independent source, which has either employed Abū ʿĪsā and developed his version or is conceivably the source he himself used.

There is a slim possibility that al-Bāqillānī was employing one of the shorter versions of Abū ʿĪsā's *Radd*. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 216.11–12, lists long, medium and shorter versions (of which the one extant version must be the longest). He maybe added details such as these when he was making cuts.

أعني اليعقوبيّة والنسطوريّة: أنّ اتّحاد الكلمة بالناسوت إختلاط وامتزاج  
كاختلاط الماء وامتزاجه بالخمّر واللبن إذا صُبَّ فيهما ومُزجَ بهما.

وزعم قوم منهم أنّ معنى اتّحاد الكلمة بالناسوت، الذي هو الجسد، هو  
اتّخاذها له هيكلًا ومحلًّا وتديرها الأشياء عليه وظهورها فيه دون غيره.  
واختلفوا في معنى ظهور الكلمة في الهيكل وأدراعها له وإظهار التدبير عليه،  
فقال أكثرهم: معنى ذلك أنّها حلّتْه ومازجته واختلطت به اختلاط الخمر  
واللبن بالماء عند امتزاجهما.

وقال قوم منهم: إنّ ظهور الكلمة في الجسد واتّحادها به ليس على معنى  
المزاج والاختلاط، ولكن على سبيل ظهور صورة الإنسان في المرآة والأجسام  
الصقيلة النقيّة عند مقابلتها من غير حلول صورة الإنسان في المرآة، وكظهور  
نقش الخاتم وكلّ طابع في الشمع والطين وكلّ ذي لين قابل للطبع من  
الأجسام من غير حلول نقش الخاتم والرشم<sup>2</sup> في الشمع والطين والتراب  
والدقيق.<sup>3</sup>

وقال بعضهم: أقول إنّ الكلمة اتّحدت بجسد المسيح على معنى أنّها حلّتْه  
من غير مماسّة ولا ممازجة ومخالطة، كما أقول أنّ الله تعالى حالّ في السماء  
وليس بمماسّ ولا مخالط لها، وكما أقول أنّ العقل جوهر حالّ في النفس وهو  
مع ذلك غير مخالط للنفس ولا مماسّ لها.

وزعمت الروم، وهم الملكيّة، أنّ معنى اتحاد الكلمة بالجسد أنّ الاثنين صارا  
واحدًا وصارت الكثرة قلّة وصارت الكلمة وما اتّحدت به واحدًا، وكان

<sup>1</sup>ب، ص، ف م (نص): اتّخاذه || م (هامش)، خ: اتّخاذها. <sup>2</sup>ص، ف || ب: الرشم. <sup>3</sup>خ: في الشمع والطين والتراب.

The majority of them, the Jacobites and Nestorians, claim that the uniting of the Word with the human nature was a mingling and mixing like the mingling and mixing of water with wine and milk if it is poured into them and mixed with them.

People among them claim that the meaning of the Uniting of the Word with the human nature, which was the body, was its taking it as a location and substrate, and its directing things through it and its appearing through it and no other. They differ over the meaning of the appearance of the Word in the location, its putting it on, and the manifestation of direction through it. Most of them say: The meaning of this is that it inhered within it, mixed with it and mingled with it in the way that wine and milk mingle with water when they are mixed.

People among them say: The appearance of the Word in the body and its uniting with it was not in the sense of mingling and mixing, but in the way the form of a man appears in a mirror and polished, clean objects when he is in front of them, without the man's form inhering in the mirror; or like the appearance of an engraving on a seal or any stamp in wax or clay or any soft, impressionable body, without the engraving on the seal or imprint inhering in the wax or clay or earth or powder.

One of them says: I say that the Word united with the body of Christ in the sense that it inhered in it without touching, mixing or mingling, in the same way that I say God almighty dwells in the heaven and does not touch or mingle with it, and in the same way as I say that the reason is a substance which inheres in the soul, but even so is not mingled with the soul and is not touching it.<sup>45</sup>

The Byzantines, the Melkites, say: The meaning of the Uniting of the Word with the body is that the two became one, the many became few, the Word and that with which it united became one, and that this one through uniting was two beforehand.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> This individual's explanation is distantly reminiscent of the Melkite Theodore Abū Qurra, who in his *Maymār fī al-radd 'alā man yankaru li-llāh al-tajassud*, in C. Bacha, ed., *Les oeuvres arabes de Théodore Aboucarra Évêque d'Haran*, Beirut, 1904, pp. 180–186, draws the analogy of the indwelling of the divine in the human nature of Christ with God being seated on his heavenly throne, as in Q 7.54, 39.75 etc.

<sup>46</sup> The insistence upon the two natures becoming one is more reminiscent of Jacobite Christology than Melkite; cf. Abū 'Īsā in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 70–71 §12. In the Chalcedonian definition the two natures are indeed declared to be one hypostasis or *prosōpon*, but they nevertheless preserve their separate identities, which the summary given here seems to deny.

هذا الواحد بالاتّحاد اثنين قبل ذلك. هذا جملة المشهور عنهم في معنى الاتّحاد.

23. فأما مَنْ زعم منهم أنّ معنى الاتّحاد هو ظهور الابن في الجسد وأدراعه له على سبيل ظهور الوجه في المرآة والنقش في المطبوع من غير حلول الوجه في المرآة وانتقال النقش إلى الشمع، فإنّه لا معنى له، لأنّ الوجه لا يظهر في المرآة ولا صورة مثله ولا ينتقل إليها ولا يوجد على صفحتها ولا مماًزجاً لها. وإنّما يدرك الإنسان وجه نفسه عند مقابله هذه الأجسام الصافية الصقيلة بإدراك يحدث له بجري العادة عند مقابله هذه الأجسام، أو بانعكاس الشعاع على ما يذهب إليه بعض المتكلّمين. فيظنّ عند إدراكه لنفسه ومقابلة الجسم الصقيل أنّ في المرآة صورة هي وجهه أو مثل صورة وجهه، وليس ذلك كذلك. وقد بيّنا هذا في غير هذا الموضع<sup>1</sup> بما يُغني الناظر فيه. وإذا ثبت أنّه لا شيء يظهر في المرآة ولا يختصّ بها، بطل بناء الاتّحاد عليه.

24. وأما تشبيههم ذلك بظهور نقش الطابع في الشمع والطين، فإنّه باطل وتخليط من قائله. وذلك أنّ الظاهر في الشمع شيء مثل نقش الخاتم وهو غيره لأنّ الحروف الموجودة بالشمع هي بعض له وجزء من أجزائه، وما في الطابع من الحروف هو بعض الطابع ومن جملة. وهما غيران يصحّ وجود أحدهما مع عدم الآخر، فظنّهم أنّ نفس النقش الذي في الشمع هو نفس الطابع جهل وتفريط.<sup>2</sup> فيجب على هذا، إن لم تكن الكلمة هي نفسها الظاهرة في جسد المسيح، أن يكون الظاهر فيه غيرها وهو شيء مثلهما وأن يكون لله ابنان وكلمتان أحدهما لا يحلّ الأجسام ولا يتّخذها هيكلًا ومكانًا والآخر

<sup>1</sup>ص، ف || ب: في غير موضع. <sup>2</sup>ص، ف || ب: وتخليط.



This is everything that is widely known from them on the meaning of the Uniting.

23. Concerning the one among them who claims that the meaning of the Uniting is the appearing of the Son in the body and his putting it on in the way that a face appears in a mirror or an impression in something that is pressed upon, without any inhering of the face in the mirror or transfer of the impression to the wax, this has no meaning. This is because the face does not appear in the mirror nor any form like it, and it is not transferred to it, does not exist on its surface and does not mix with it. Rather, the man perceives his face when he is in front of such clear, polished objects through perception which happens for him by normal occurrence when he is in front of such objects or, according to what some theologians think, by the reflection of light rays. So when he perceives himself in front of a polished object he thinks there is a face or something like the form of a face in the mirror. But this is not the case. We have demonstrated this elsewhere, which may profit anyone who investigates it.<sup>47</sup> So if it is concluded that nothing appears in the mirror or is specific to it, then it is misguided to found the Uniting on it.<sup>48</sup>

24. Concerning their comparison of this with the appearance of the stamp in wax or clay, whoever says this is misguided and insane. This is because what appears in the wax is something that is like the image of the seal but is other than it, because the letters that come to be in the wax are a portion of it and one of its parts, while the letters on the stamp are part of the stamp and of its whole. They are two different things; one may appropriately exist while the other does not. So their notion that the actual impression in the wax is the actual stamp is ignorance and remissness. With regard to this, if the actual being of the Word did not appear in the body of Christ, it follows that what appeared in him was other than it, something like it, and that God has two Sons and Words, one not inhering in objects and taking them as locations and places, and the other inhering in the body of Christ. This

---

<sup>47</sup> The list of al-Bāqillānī's works given by Ibish, *Political Doctrine*, pp. 7–16, does not include any title that immediately suggests a work devoted to optics or physics. So al-Bāqillānī is maybe referring to a demonstration within a larger work.

<sup>48</sup> The comparison is inappropriate because, al-Bāqillānī argues, unlike the divine nature uniting with the human nature, the image does not actually exist in the mirror.

حالّ في جسد المسيح. وهذا قول بأربعة أقانيم وترك القول بالثلثية.

25. وأما مَنْ قال إنّ الاتحاد إنّما هو حلول الكلمة في المتّحد به واختلاطها به وممازجتها له، فإنّه يقال له: إذا جاز على الكلمة الحلول في الجسد المخلوق وممازجتها له واختلاطها به، وهي مع ذلك قديمة، فما أنكرتم من اجتماعها مع الجسد ومماسّتها له؟ وإذا جاز على القديم سبحانه المماسّة والمجاورة والمخالطة للمحدّث والممازجة له، فلم لا يجوز عليه مقابلة المحدث ومحاذاته؟ ولم لا يجوز عليه الظهور والكمون والحركة والسكون والبعد والقرب والإشغال والتفريغ والتصوير والتركيب؟ فإن راموا في ذلك فصلاً لم يجدوه. وإن مروا على ذلك، قيل لهم: فإذا جاز أن يكون ما هذه صفته قديماً وقد كان في القدم غير مماسّ ولا ممازج ولا مخالط، فما أنكرتم أن يكون سائر الأجسام المتماسّة المختلطة المتحرّكة الساكنة قديمة؟ وما الذي جعل الكلمة التي هذه صفتها بالقدم أولى منها بالمحدث؟ وما الذي جعل الأجسام بالمحدث أولى من الكلمة؟

26. ويقال لليعقوبية: إذا جاز أن ينقلب ما ليس بلحم ولا دم لنفسه وما هو مخالف للدم واللحم لنفسه لحماً ودماً بالاتّحاد، فلم لا يجوز أن تنقلب الكلمة التي تخالف المحدثات لنفسها وليست بمحدثّة لنفسها، محدثةً بالاتّحاد فيصير القديم لنفسه محدثاً عند اتّحاده بالمحدث كما صار لحماً ودماً عند اتّحاده باللحم والدم؟ ولم لا يصير المحدث لنفسه قبل اتّحاد القديم به قديماً عند اتّحاد القديم به، فيخرج عن أن يكون لحماً ودماً عند اتّحاده في المتّحد به، فتصير الطبيعتان واحدة ويصير ما ليس بلحم ولا دم لحماً ودماً وما هو لحم ودم غير لحم ودم؟ فلا يجدون إلى دفع ذلك سبيلاً.

<sup>1</sup> ب || ص: عند اتّحاده في الوقت به فتصير؛ ف: عند اتّحاده فتصير.

is teaching about four hypostases and an abandonment of the teaching about the Trinity.

25. As for the person who says that the Uniting was no more than the inhering, mingling and mixing of the Word in what it united with; say to him: If it is possible for the Word to inhere in the created body and to mix and mingle with it, despite its being eternal, why do you deny that it could combine and come into contact with the body? If contact, proximity, mingling and mixing with the temporal is possible for the eternal One, blessed be he, then why are not being near the temporal or alongside it not possible for him? And why are appearance and concealment, movement and rest, distance and nearness, being active and being inactive, being formed and being composed not possible for it? If they seek for a distinction here, they will not find one.

If they allow this, say to them: If it is possible for the one who has these attributes to be eternal, and in eternity there is no contact, mixing or blending, then why do you deny that other objects which contact, mingle, move and rest are eternal? And what makes the Word, with such attributes, eternal any more than temporal? And what makes objects temporal any more than eternal?<sup>49</sup>

26. Say to the Jacobites: If it is possible for what is not itself flesh and blood but is itself the opposite of blood and flesh to be transformed into flesh and blood by the Uniting, then why should it not be possible for the Word, which is in itself the opposite of temporal things and is not itself temporal, to be transformed through the Uniting into a being that was temporal, so that what is in itself eternal should become temporal at the Uniting with the temporal, just as it became flesh and blood at the Uniting with flesh and blood? And why should what was in itself temporal before the Uniting of the eternal with it not have become eternal at the Uniting of the eternal with it, so that it ceased to be flesh and blood at its Uniting with what united with it, and hence the two natures became one and what was not flesh and blood became flesh and blood, and what was flesh and blood became what was not flesh and blood? They will not find a way to reject this.

---

<sup>49</sup> All the attributes and activities of temporal, material things itemised here are by definition impossible for the eternal. So al-Bāqillānī's contention is that the whole distinction between the temporal and eternal is broken down because the inhering of the divine nature in the human entails these elements of intimate proximity.

27. وأما قول مَنْ قال إنّ الاتّحاد هو حلول الكلمة في الناسوت من غير مماسّة له، وإنّّه كحلول الباري سبحانه في السماء وكحلوله على العرش من غير مماسّة لهما، فإنّّه باطل غير معقول. وذلك أنّ الباري سبحانه ليس في السماء ولا هو مستوٍ على العرش بمعنى حلوله على العرش. لأنّّه لو كان حالاً في أحدهما ومستوياً على الآخر بمعنى الحلول، لوجب أن يكون مماسّاً لهما لا محالة.

28. وأما قولهم إنّ العقل جوهر حالّ في النفس وغير مماسّ لها، فإنّّه باطل لأنّ الجوهر لا يحلّ في العرض وإنّما يحلّ في الجسم على معنى المماسّة له والاعتماد عليه واتّخاذه مكاناً يُعتمد<sup>1</sup> ويحيط به من جهاته كحلول الماء في الحبّ<sup>2</sup> والدهن في القارورة. وإذا لم يعقل الحلول إلّا مماسّة وملاصقة، وكانت المجاورة والاجتماع من صفات الأجسام، وكانت كلمة الله تعالى غير جسم، لم يجز عليها الاتّحاد والحلول في الأماكن.

29. وأما قول الروم إنّ الاتّحاد هو أن يصير الكثير قليلاً والاثنان واحداً، فإنّّه قول لجميعهم لأنّهم كلّهم يزعمون أنّ الاتّحاد هو أن يصير الكثير قليلاً والروم توافق اليعاقبة والنسطورية في أن الاتّحاد لا يكون إلّا بالامتزاج والاختلاط؛ فيقال لهم: إذا لم يجز أن يحصل الاتّحاد وأن يصير الاثنان واحداً إلّا بالاختلاط والامتزاج—وكنا قد بيّنا أنّ ذلك مماسّة وملاصقة وأنّه بمنزلة الحركة والسكون والظهور والكمون، وأنّ هذه الأمور أجمع تختصّ بالأجسام ولا تجوز إلّا عليها—لم يصحّ الاتّحاد على الكلمة

<sup>1</sup> اص || ب، ف: يعتمد. <sup>2</sup> خ: الحبّ.

27. As for the statement of the one who says that the Uniting is the inhering of the Word in the human nature without touching it, and that it is like the Creator's, blessed be he, dwelling in the heaven and his inhering in the throne without touching them, this is misguided and irrational. This is because the Creator, blessed be he, is not in the heaven or sitting on the throne in the sense that he inheres in the throne. For if he did dwell in the one and sat on the other in the sense of inhering, then he would necessarily have to touch them both, without doubt.<sup>50</sup>

28. As for their saying that the reason is a substance that inheres in the soul without touching it, this is misguided. For a substance does not inhere in an accident but only in a body, in the sense of touching it, being supported by it and taking it as a place which supports it and surrounds it with its sides,<sup>51</sup> as water inheres in a seed<sup>52</sup> and oil in a bottle. And if inhering can only be understood as touching and contact, and adjacency and combination are attributes of physical bodies, and the Word of God almighty is not a body, then uniting and inhering in places is not possible for it.

29. As for the statement of the Byzantines that the Uniting was many becoming few and two one, and this is their teaching as a whole because all of them claim that the Uniting was that many became few—and the Byzantines agree with the Jacobites and the Nestorians that the Uniting only occurred through mixing and mingling; say to them: If it is only correct that the Uniting occurred and that two became one through mingling and mixing—and we have already shown that this is touching and contiguity, and is on the level of movement and rest, appearance and concealment, and that these matters all pertain to physical bodies and them only<sup>53</sup>—it cannot be allowed that the eternal Word should unite or that two should ever become one. For

---

<sup>50</sup> There is an echo here of the debates of former times within Islam. For the Mu'tazila of the third/ninth century statements such as *thumma istawā 'alā al-'arsh* (Q 7:54) convey exactly the sense of physical contact, and so they reworded them to *thumma istawlā 'alā al-'arsh*; al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 157. Al-Bāqillānī avoids becoming embroiled in this by blandly asserting that the sense of *istawā* is not that God has physical contact with the throne, but he does not say what this sense actually is.

<sup>51</sup> Since the soul is an accidental attribute of the person, reason cannot inhere in it.

<sup>52</sup> Both alternatives *ḥabb*, seed, and *jubb*, well, are equally plausible and attractive.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. §25 above.

القديمة ولا أن يصير الاثنان واحداً أبداً، لأنه معلق بمحال لا يصح، وهو مماسة ما ليس بجسم ولا جوهر للأجسام والجواهر،<sup>1</sup> وذلك ممتنع محال.

30. ويقال للروم أيضاً: إذا جاز أن يتحد قديم بمحدث فيصيران واحداً وقد كانا اثنين قبل الاتحاد، فما أنكرتم من أن يتحد محدث بمحدث إذا خالطه ومازجه فيصيران<sup>2</sup> بذلك واحداً؟ وما أنكرتم أن يصير الرطلان والقدهان اللذان أحدهما خمر والآخر ماء،<sup>3</sup> إذا اختلطا وامتزجا، رطلاً واحداً وقدهاً واحداً؟ وما أنكرتم أيضاً من أن يصير العرضان، إذا وجدا في محل واحد، عرضاً واحداً جنساً واحداً وإن كان أحدهما حركة والآخر سواداً؟ وما أنكرتم من أن تتكثر القلة فتصير الطينة الواحدة والشئ الواحد، الذي لا بعض له ولا نصف ولا تأليف فيه ولا صورة له، مائة ألف شئ وذا أبعاد وأقطار وصور متغايرة وأشكال مختلفة على حد ما يقوله بعض الفلاسفة؟ فإن مرّوا على هذا أجمع تركوا قولهم وتجاهلوا، وإن أبوه لم يجدوا فصلاً.

31. ويقال للروم أيضاً: إذا كان من دينكم مخالفة النسطورية واليعاقبة في قولهم إنّ الكلمة اتحدت بإنسان واحد جزئيّ دون غيره، وكتمت زعمون أنّ الابن إنّما اتحد بالإنسان الكلّي، وهو الجوهر الجامع لسائر أشخاص الناس، لكي يخلص الجوهر الجامع لسائر الناس من المعصية، وهو إذا اتحد بالإنسان الكلّي صار معه واحداً، فيجب أن يصير الجوهر الكلّي جزئياً وأقنوماً واحداً، لأنّ الابن أحد الأقانيم وليس هو كلّ الأقانيم والخواص، فهو من حيث القنومية شخص واحد جزئيّ. فإذا صار عند الاتحاد بالإنسان الكلّي، الذي هو الجوهر الجامع لكلّ الناس، شيئاً واحداً، وجب أن يكون كلياً جزئياً، لأنه كليّ من حيث كان جوهرًا جامعاً لسائر

<sup>1</sup>ص، ف || ب: ما ليس بجسم وذلك ممتنع محال. <sup>2</sup>م (هامش): ولعل قراءة "فيصيرا" أحسن لأنّ الفاء هنا سببية. <sup>3</sup>ب، ف || ص: لبن.

it is redolent of the impossible and inadmissible, this contact of what is not a physical body or substance with bodies and substances, and it is ruled out, impossible.

30. Say to the Byzantines in addition: If it is acceptable that the Eternal united with the temporal so that they became one, and they had been two before the Uniting, then why do you deny that the temporal can unite with the temporal if it mingles and mixes with it and in this way they become one? And why do you deny that two *rotls* and two *keddās*, one of them wine and the other water, could become one *rotl* and one *kedda* by mingling and mixing? In addition, why do you deny that if two accidents exist in one location they should be one accident and one species, even though one was movement and the other blackness? And why do you deny that the little can become a lot, so that one piece of stuff and one thing that has no part, middle, composition or shape can become a hundred thousand things with parts, dimensions, sub-sections, different shapes, diverse forms, according to the definition given by some of the philosophers? If they allow all this, they abandon their teaching for ignorance, though if they reject it they will not be able to find any distinction.<sup>54</sup>

31. Say to the Byzantines in addition: If in your belief there is a difference from the Nestorians and Jacobites in their teaching that the Word united with one single individual human and no other, while you claim that the Son united only with the universal human, which is the substance general to all human individuals, in order to save the substance general to all humans from sin, and when he united with the universal human he became one with it, then it must follow that the universal substance became individual and one hypostasis.<sup>55</sup> For the Son is one of the hypostases, not all of the hypostases or particularities, and with respect to hypostaticity is thus one individual. If he became one thing at the uniting with the universal human, which is the substance general to all humanity, he must have been universal and individual. For he was universal with respect to being substance general

<sup>54</sup> This kind of *reductio ad absurdum* attack is reminiscent of Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā in Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 86–87 § 10, and pp. 125–155 §§ 187–212, for his exhaustive arguments against the Uniting of the human and divine natures in this form. Among earlier Muslim polemicists Abū ʿĪsā is the only one who shows awareness of the Melkite concept of the universal human.

الناس وجزئيّ من حيث كان خاصّاً وقنوماً للجوهر العامّ. فتوجب أن يكون كليّاً جزئياً، وهذه غاية الإحالة.

### فصل

32. وقد أطبقت النصارى على أنّ الاتحاد فعل من الأفعال صار به المتّحد متّحداً والمسيح مسيحاً؛ فيقال لهم: خبرونا عن الاتحاد بالإنسان الذي اتّحدت به الكلمة، إذا كان فعلاً، فهل له عندكم فاعل أم لا؟ فإن قالوا: لا فاعل له؛ قيل لهم: فما أنكرتم من أن يكون سائر الأفعال والحوادث لا فاعل لها؟ وليس ذلك من قولهم. وإن قالوا: الاتحاد فعل لفاعل فعله وكان متّحداً به؛ قيل لهم: فمن فاعله؟ أهو الجوهر الجامع للأقانيم دون الأقانيم، أم الأقانيم الثلاثة دونه، أم هو والثلاثة الأقانيم، أم الفاعل له واحد من الأقانيم؟ فإن قالوا: هو الجوهر العامّ الجامع للأقانيم؛ قيل لهم: فيجب أن يكون الجوهر هو المتّحد بالجسد والإنسان الكلّيّ، أو الجزئيّ على ما تختارونه، لأنّ المتّحد عندكم هو من فعل الاتحاد دون من لم يفعله. ويجب أيضاً أن يكون هو الإله المستحقّ للعبادة، لأنّه هو الفعّال.<sup>1</sup>

33. وكذلك إن قالوا: الجوهر والأقانيم فعلوا الاتحاد؛ قيل لهم: فيجب أن يكون هو الثلاثة الأقانيم متّحدين بالإنسان، ولا معنى لقولكم إنّ "الابن وحده هو المتّحد دون الأب والروح ودون الجوهر العامّ الجامع للأقانيم". وهذا نقض قولكم<sup>2</sup> إنّ الاتحاد للابن فقط. وكذلك إن قالوا: إنّما فعل الاتحاد الثلاثة الأقانيم دون الجوهر؛ قيل لهم: فيجب أن يكون الروح أيضاً متّحداً وألاً يكون الابن وحده من خواصّ

<sup>1</sup> ف || ب: الفاعل لها؛ ص: الفاعل. <sup>2</sup> ب || ص، ف: قولهم.



to all humans, and individual with respect to being a particularity and hypostasis of the common substance. So he must have been universal and individual, which is the utmost impossibility.

### *Section*

32. The Christians agree that the Uniting was a particular action by which the united being became united and Christ Christ. So say to them: Tell us about the Uniting with the human with whom the Word united; if it was an action, did it have an agent in your view or not?<sup>56</sup>

If they say: It had no agent; say to them: Then why do you deny that all actions and events have no agent?—This is not their teaching.

If they say: The Uniting was an action of the agent who performed it and it united through it; say to them: Then who was its agent? Was it the substance which combines the hypostases and not the hypostases, or the three hypostases and not it? Or was it the three hypostases? Or was the agent of it one of the hypostases?

If they say: It was the common substance that combines the hypostases; say to them: Then the substance must be the one that united with the body and the universal substance, or the individual according to what you prefer. For, according to you, the one who united is the one that effected the Uniting and not those who did not effect it. And it also follows that he is the Divinity who is worthy of worship, for he is the effective being.

33. Similarly, if they say: The substance and the hypostases effected the Uniting; say to them: Then it follows that it was it and the three hypostases that united with the human, and there is no sense to your statement, 'It was the Son alone who united, without the Father and Spirit or the common substance that combines the hypostases'. This destroys your teaching that the Uniting was of the Son alone.

Similarly, if they say: The three hypostases alone without the substance effected the Uniting; say to them: Then it follows that the Spirit

---

<sup>56</sup> The argument about the agent of the act of Incarnation and the identity of the precise divine character involved in it was a well-known polemical topos in the early Islamic period; cf. D. Thomas, 'Early Muslim Responses to Christianity', in Thomas, *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule*, pp. 236–239. There can be little doubt that al-Bāqillānī derives his version, in §§ 32–35, from Abū 'Īsā; cf. Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 96–107 §§ 151–160.

الجوهر متّحداً.

وإن قالوا: فاعل الاتحاد إنّما هو الابن وحده، ولأنّفراده بفعل الاتحاد كان متّحداً دون الروح؛ قيل لهم: فإذا جاز أن ينفرد الابن بفعل حادث هو الاتحاد دون الروح والأب ودون الجوهر العام، فلم لا يجوز أيضاً أن ينفرد الروح بفعل حادث وحوادث أخر وأن ينفرد كلّ أقنوم من الأقانيم بعوالم وأفعال لا يفعلها الآخر وينفرد الجوهر الجامع لها بفعل غير فعلها؟ وإذا كان ذلك كذلك جاز أن تتناع وتختلف.

ويقال لهم: إذا كانت الأقانيم تفعل كما أنّ الجوهر الجامع لها يفعل، فلم صار بأن يكون جامعاً لها وأن تكون خواصّ له أولى من أن يكون هو خاصّاً لها وهي جامعة له فيكون أقنوماً من أقانيمها؟ فلا يجدون إلى دفع ذلك سبيلاً.<sup>1</sup>

### مسئلة أخرى عليهم في الاتحاد<sup>2</sup>

34. ويقال لهم: خبرونا كيف اتّحدت الكلمة التي هي الابن بجسد المسيح دون الأب والروح مع قولكم بأنّه غير مباين لهما ولا منفصل عنهما. وإن جاز ذلك، فما أنكرتم من أن يكون الماء الممازج للخمير المختلط به مشروباً دون الخمير أو الخمير مشروباً دون الماء وإن كانا غير منفصلين ولا متباينين؟ فإذا استحال هذا عندكم ووجب أن يكون شارب الخمير الممتزج بالماء شارباً للخمير والماء إذا كانا غير منفصلين ولا متباينين، فما أنكرتم من أن يجب، متى<sup>3</sup> كان الابن متّحداً وهو غير منفصل من الروح والأب ولا مباين لهما، أن يكون الأب والروح متّحدين كما أنّ الابن متّحد؟

فإن قالوا: إنّ الكلمة إنّما اتّحدت بالإنسان الكلّيّ في الجزئيّ الذي ولدته مريم؛ قيل لهم: فيجب أيضاً أن يكون الأب والروح متّحدين بالكلّيّ في الجزئيّ الذي ولدته مريم. لأننا لسنا نقصد بهذا السؤال الكلام في الإنسان الذي اتّحدت به الكلمة، وهل هو جزئيّ أو كليّ أو اتّحد بالكلّيّ في

<sup>1</sup>ص، ف || ب: فلا يجدون لذلك مدفعا. <sup>2</sup>ب: مسئلة؛ ص: مسئلة أخرى عليهم؛ ف: فصل مسئلة أخرى عليهم في الاتحاد. <sup>3</sup>ص، ف || ب: إذا.

also united, unless the Son alone among the particularities of the substance united.

And if they say: The agent of the Uniting was the Son alone, and through his being singled out in effecting the Uniting he united without the Spirit; say to them: If it is possible for the Son to be singled out in effecting an event such as the Uniting without the Spirit and Father or the common substance, then why is it also not possible for the Spirit to be singled out by effecting an event and other events, and for each of the hypostases to be singled out by worlds and actions that the others did not effect, or for the substance that combines them to be singled out by an action that was not theirs? If this is so, it is possible for them to hinder one another and to be at variance.

And say to them: If the hypostases acted in the same way as the substance that combines them, then why should it combine them and they be particularities to it, rather than it being a particular to them and them combining it, so that it was one of the hypostases? They will not find a way to reject this.

*Another question to them on the Uniting*

34. Say to them: Tell us how the Word, which is the Son, united with the body of Christ without the Father and the Spirit, despite your teaching that it was not distinct from either of them or separated from them. And if this is acceptable, why do you deny that the water that is mixed with the wine and mingled with it can be drunk apart from the wine, or the wine drunk apart from the water, even though they are not separated or distinct from each other? If in your view this is impossible, and someone who drinks the wine mixed with the water must be drinking the wine and water if they are not separated or distinct from each other, then why do you deny that while the Son was united though was not separated from the Spirit and Father or distinct from them, the Father and Spirit were united just as the Son was united?

If they say: The Word only united with the universal human in the particular who was born of Mary; say to them: Then the Father and the Spirit must also have united with the universal in the individual who was born of Mary. We do not intend in this matter any discussion about the human with whom the Word united, and whether he was individual or universal, or whether it united with the universal in the individual who was born of Mary, but only discussion about how

الجزئي الذي ولدته مريم، وإنّما الكلام في كيف يمكن أن يكون الابن متّحداً بها اتّحد به، كليّاً كان أو جزئياً، دون الأب والروح، وهو غير مباين لهما ولا منفصل عنهما. فأجيبوا عن هذا إن كنتم قادرين!

35. ثمّ يقال لهم: إن كانت الكلمة اتّحدت بالإنسان الكلّيّ، فلا تخلو أن تكون اتّحدت به في مكان أو لا في مكان. فإن كانت اتّحدت به لا في مكان فليس بينها وبين الجسد المولود المأخوذ من مريم إلّا ما بينها وبين سائر أجساد الناس وسائر الأجساد،<sup>1</sup> ولا مزية لمريم ولا للجسد المأخوذ منها إذا لم يكن للابن اتّحاد به ولا بغيره. ويجب أن يكون القتل والصلب جاريين على الجسد فقط، لا على الابن ولا على المسيح لأنّ الجسد الذي لا اتّحاد للابن به ليس بمسيح، فكيف يكون المسيح مقتولاً مصلوباً؟ وإن كان اتّحاد الابن بالكلّيّ اتّحاداً به في مكان ما، هو الجسد المأخوذ من مريم أو غيره من الأجساد،<sup>2</sup> فيجب أن يكون الكلّيّ محصوراً في ذلك المكان الجزئيّ وأن يكون الجزئيّ حاوياً محيطاً بالكلّيّ ومكاناً له وإن كان جزءاً منه. وهذا عكس ما في العقل وقلبه، لأنّ ذلك لو جاز لجاز اشتغال العدد القليل على العدد الكثير وزيادته عليه، ولجاز أن يكون الصغير من الأجسام محيطاً بالعظيم وحاوياً له. وإذا علمنا بأوائل العقول فساد ذلك، علمنا أيضاً استحالة اتّحاد الابن بالكلّيّ، إن كان ههنا كلّيّ، في مكان صغير جزئيّ.

### مسئلة على الملكية

36. يقال لهم: خبرونا كيف ولدت مريم الابن دون الأب وروح القدس، وهو غير مباين لهما ولا منفصل عنهما، فيكون المتّحد بالجسد<sup>3</sup> حملاً في بطن مريم، والأب والروح والجوهر الجامع للأقانيم لا في بطن مريم، وهما مع ذلك غير متباينين ولا منفصلين ممّا هو حالّ في الجسد في بطن مريم، فما لا

<sup>1</sup> أب || ص: وسائر الاجسام؛ ف: أجساد الناس ولا مزية. <sup>2</sup> ص، ف || ب: الاجسام. <sup>3</sup> ب، ف || ص: بالجسم.

the Son could have become united with what he did unite, whether universal or individual, without the Father and Spirit, while not being distinct or separated from them. So answer this, if you can!

35. Then say to them: If the Word united with the universal human, then it can only have united with him in a location or not in a location.<sup>57</sup> If it united with him not in a location, then between it and the body that was born and taken from Mary there is only what is between it and other bodies of people and other bodies. And Mary and the body taken from her have no distinctiveness, because the Son did not unite with it and nothing else. And the killing and crucifixion must have happened to the body alone, not to the Son or to Christ, because the body without the Son united to it was not Christ. So how could Christ be killed and crucified?

If the uniting of the Son with the universal was a uniting with it in any location, whether the body taken from Mary or any other body, then the universal would have to have been confined in this individual location, and the individual would have to have enclosed and contained the universal and been a location to it, even though the individual was from it. This is contrary to reason and its reverse, because if it were acceptable then it would be acceptable for the few to include the many and to exceed it, and for the smallest body to contain the greatest and enclose it. If we know by the basics of reason that this is wrong, we also know that it is impossible for the Son to unite with the universal, if there were such, in a small, individual location.

#### *A question to the Melkites*

36. Say to them: Tell us how Mary gave birth to the Son without the Father or Holy Spirit, when he was not distinct from them or separated from them, so that which united with the body was carried in Mary's womb, and the Father, Spirit and substance that combines the hypostases were not in Mary's womb, though despite this they were not distinct or separated from what inhered within the body in Mary's

---

<sup>57</sup> Al-Bāqillānī's point here is that this Melkite version of the doctrine either rules out any particular relationship between the human called Christ and the divine Word because the latter united with all individuals who were included in the universal human, or restricts the universal human to the status of an individual because it must have been the subject of the human experiences of Christ.

ينفصل ولا يتميّز بالذات كيف يكون منه مولود ومنه غير مولود ومنه متّحد ومنه غير متّحد، لو لا الجهل والعجز؟

### مسئلة أخرى على الملكية

37. يقال لهم: خبرونا عن مريم، أهي إنسان كليّ أم إنسان جزئيّ؟  
فإن قالوا: إنّها كليّ، تجاهلوا؛ وقيل لهم: فما أنكرتم أن يكون كلّ ذكر وأنثى من الناس إنساناً كليّاً؟  
فإن قالوا: هو كذلك، تركوا قولهم؛ وقيل لهم: فأيّ هو الإنسان الجزئيّ وكلّ جزئيّ تشيرون إليه على قولكم هذا فهو كليّ؟ فلا يجدون إلى إثبات الجزئيّ سبيلاً، وفي ذلك هدم مذهبهم.  
وإن قالوا: مريم إنسان جزئيّ؛ قيل لهم: فالإنسان الذي ولدته، أليس هو الذي اتّحد الابن به بولادته؟  
فإذا قالوا: نعم؛ قيل لهم: فخبرونا عن الإنسان الذي ولدته مريم، أكلّيّ هو أم جزئيّ؟  
فإن قالوا: جزئيّ، تركوا قولهم بأنّ الابن متّحد بالإنسان الكلّيّ الذي أراد خلاصه، وصاروا إلى قول النسطورية واليعاقبة.

38. وإن قالوا: إنّ الإنسان المأخوذ من مريم الذي اتّحدت به الكلمة إنسان كليّ؛ قيل لهم: أفليس هذا الإنسان المولود من مريم هو ابن مريم؟  
فإذا قالوا: أجل؛ قيل لهم: فهو كليّ وأمه التي هي مريم إنسان جزئيّ. فيجب على قولكم أن يكون الإنسان الكلّيّ ابن الإنسان الجزئيّ. وهذا طريف جدّاً، لأننا لو فرضنا عندهم عدم مريم لم يعدم الإنسان الكلّيّ، ولو فرضنا عدم الإنسان الكلّيّ لم تكن مريم ولا غيرها من جزئيات الإنسان.

womb. How could part of what was not separated or divided in essence be born and part not born, part be united and part not united, unless this is ignorance and feebleness?

*Another question to the Melkites*

37. Say to them: Tell us about Mary, was she universal human or individual human?<sup>58</sup>

If they say: She was universal; they show they are ignorant. Say to them: Then why do you deny that every human male and female are universal human?

If they say: This is the case; they abandon their teaching. Say to them: Then whatever is an individual human, and every individual you indicate according to this teaching of yours, is this a universal? They will not be able to find any way of confirming the individual, and in this is the destruction of their belief.

If they say: Mary was an individual human; say to them: But the human she gave birth to, was this not the one with whom the Son united at his birth?

If they say: Yes; say to them: Then tell us about the human whom Mary gave birth to, was he universal or individual?

If they say: Individual; they abandon their teaching that the Son united with the universal human whose salvation he willed, and they move over to the teaching of the Nestorians and Jacobites.

38. If they say: The human who was taken from Mary, with whom the Word united, was universal human; say to them: But was not this human who was born from Mary the son of Mary?

If they say: Of course; say to them: So he was universal, while his mother who was Mary was an individual human. So, according to your teaching the universal human must have been son of the individual human. This is very curious, for if we supposed, following their view, that Mary was non-existent, the universal would not be non-existent, and if we supposed that the universal human was non-existent then Mary and all other individual instances of the human would not exist.

---

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā in Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 126–135 §188, though the earlier polemicist does not treat the question of Mary as universal human, showing, maybe, a fuller concern than al-Bāqillānī for what Christians actually said.

فكيف يكون الكلّيّ ابن ما لا يجب أن يعدم بعده ويرتفع بارتفاعه ويكون الجزئيّ والدّاً للكلّيّ؟

ويقال لهم: أنتم تقولون ”إنّ الجوهر الكلّيّ“<sup>2</sup>، وكلّ ما تقولون إنّ كلّ لا تصحّ ولادته ولا أن يحويه مكان دون مكان. والمولود من مريم كان في بطنها، وكان مكانه منها حاوياً له، فكيف يكون كليّاً؟ وإن جاز أن يكون الكلّيّ ابن الجزئيّ، فلم لا يجوز أن تكون مريم ابنة عيسى المولود منها وأن يكون آدم ونوح ابنيّ مريم التي هي ابنة لهما؟ وهذا تجاهل عظيم لا يبلغه صاحب تحصيل.

### مسئلة على جميعهم<sup>3</sup>

39. ويقال لجميعهم: خبرونا عن اتّحاد الابن بالجسد، أكان باقياً موجوداً في حال وقوع القتل والصلب به أم لا؟  
فإن قالوا: كان باقياً موجوداً؛ قيل لهم: فالذي مات مسيح من طبيعتين: لاهوت، هو الابن، وناسوت، هو الجسد، فيجب أن يكون ابن الله القديم قد مات كما قُتل وصلّب، لأنّ جواز القتل والصلب عليه كجواز الموت. وإذا صار الابن عند القتل ميتاً لم يجوز أن يكون في تلك الحال إلهاً، لأنّ الإله لا يكون ميتاً ولا ناقصاً ولا ممّن يجوز عليه الموت. ولو جاز ذلك عليه لجاز موت الأب والروح وهذا ترك قولهم.

<sup>1</sup>ص، ف || ب: حاويا. <sup>2</sup>ب || ص: الكلي والجزء الكلي؛ ف: الكي و الحى الكلي. <sup>3</sup>ب || ص، ف: مسئلة.



So how can the universal be son so long as it is not non-existent when that is non-existent,<sup>59</sup> or increase when that increases, or the individual be parent of the universal?

Say to them: You say ‘the universal substance’, and everything that you say is universal cannot properly be born or be enclosed by one individual location. The one born from Mary was in her womb, and his location was from her enclosing him, so how could he be universal? And if it is acceptable for the universal to be son of the individual, then why is it not acceptable for Mary to be daughter of Jesus who was born from her, and for Adam and Noah to be sons of Mary who was their daughter?<sup>60</sup> This is great ignorance, which someone with learning would not utter.

*A question to them together*

39. Say to them together: Tell us about the uniting of the Son with the body, did it continue to exist at the time his killing and crucifixion took place or not?<sup>61</sup>

If they say: It continued to exist; say to them: So the one who died was Christ in two natures: divine nature, the Son, and human nature, the body. So it must follow that God’s eternal Son died, just as he was killed and crucified, because to allow that he was killed and crucified is like allowing that he died. If at the killing the Son became lifeless, he cannot possibly have been divine at this time, because the Divinity is not lifeless or imperfect, and is not such for whom death is possible. If this were possible for him, death would be possible for the Father and Spirit—which is to abandon their teaching.

If they say: The Uniting ceased at the killing and crucifixion; say to them: So the Uniting must have been broken at the killing and crucifixion—which is to abandon their teaching.

---

<sup>59</sup> The sense here seems clear, though the construction is difficult. The phrase *mā lā yaʿibū an yaʿdamū bi-ʿadamih* cannot be translated as ‘of that which need not be non-existent when it is non-existent’ as would seem natural, because the meaning would then be that the particular (‘that which’) can exist when the universal, of which it is a part, is non-existent. So the *mā lā* must be understood in a different sense, maybe as a temporal conjunction.

<sup>60</sup> Al-Bāqillānī underlines the absurdity of the implication he has drawn out from the Melkite teaching by suggesting these illogical reversals of natural relationships.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā in Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 116–125, §§ 176–186.

وإن قالوا: إنَّ الاتِّحاد بطل عند القتل والصلب؛ قيل لهم: فيجب انتقاض الاتِّحاد عند القتل والصلب—وهذا ترك قولهم. ويجب أيضاً ألا يكون المقتول مسيحاً، لأنَّ الجسد عند انتقاض الاتِّحاد ومفارقة المتَّحد به ليس بمسيح. وإنَّما يكون الجسد وما اتَّحد به مسيحاً مع ثبوت الاتِّحاد ووجوده. وإذا بطل كان المقتول المصلوب الواقع عليه الموت والدفن إنساناً، ولا معنى لقولهم إنَّ المسيح قُتل وصُلب.

### مسئلة أخرى على جميعهم في الاتِّحاد

40. ويقال لهم: لِمَ قلتم إنَّ كلمة الله اتَّحدت بجسد المسيح دون جسد موسى وإبراهيم وغيرهما من النبيِّين؟ فإن قالوا: لأجل ما ظهر على يد عيسى من فعل الآيات واختراع المعجزات التي لا يقدر البشر على مثلها، من نحو إحياء الموتى وإبراء الأكمه والأبرص وجعل القليل كثيراً وقلب الماء خمراً والمشي على الماء وصعوده السماء وإبراء الزمن وإقامة المقعد وغير ذلك من عجيب الآيات. فوجب أنَّه إله وأنَّ الكلمة متَّحدة به؛ يقال لهم: لِمَ زعمتم أنَّ عيسى فاعل ما<sup>1</sup> وصفتم من الآيات ومخترع لها؟ وما أنكرتم أن يكون غير قادر على قليل من ذلك ولا كثير، وأن يكون الله تعالى هو الذي فعل جميع ما ظهر على يده من ذلك، وتكون حاله فيه حال سائر الأنبياء فيما ظهر عليهم من الآيات؟

41. ثمَّ يقال لهم: فما أنكرتم أن يكون موسى، عليه السلام، إلهاً وأن تكون الكلمة متَّحدة به لما فعله من الآيات البديعة، نحو قلب العصا حيَّة ذات فم

<sup>1</sup>م: لما.

It must also be the case that the one who was killed could not be Christ, because when the Uniting was broken and the being who was united with was separated from, the body was not Christ. For the body and what united with it was only Christ when the Uniting was certain and existent. If it was broken, the one who was killed and crucified and was affected by death and burial was human. So their teaching that Christ was killed and crucified is meaningless.

*Another question on the Uniting to them together*

40. Say to them: Why do you say that the Word of God united with the body of Christ but not the body of Moses or Abraham or any of the other prophets?<sup>62</sup>

If they say: Because of the signs performed and miracles made through Jesus the like of which humans are not capable of, such as raising the dead, healing the blind and the leper, making what is little a lot, turning water into wine, walking on the water, his ascension into heaven, healing the sick, making the crippled walk, and other miraculous signs.<sup>63</sup> So he must have been divine, and the Word must have united with him; say to them: Why do you claim that Jesus was the performer and originator of the signs you describe? Why do you deny that he was incapable of a small or great part of this, and that God almighty was the one who performed all this that appeared through him, and his position in this was the same as the other prophets when signs appeared through them?<sup>64</sup>

41. Then say to them: So why do you deny that Moses, peace be upon him, was divine, and that the Word united with him when he performed marvellous signs, such as changing the staff into a serpent

---

<sup>62</sup> The comparison of prophetic miracles was a favourite topos among Muslim polemicists in the early Islamic period. Al-Bāqillānī's version here bears a close relationship to the one in al-Māturīdī and in the fourth/tenth century convert al-Ḥasan Ibn Ayyūb; cf. the introduction to this text, p. 139, and also to al-Māturīdī, pp. 87–89.

<sup>63</sup> This is presumably a summary of a fuller list that appeared in al-Bāqillānī's source.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Bāqillānī's version of this comparison argument gives emphasis to the similar physiology of performance between Jesus and other prophets, rather than to resemblances between actual miracles.

وعَيْنَيْنِ وخروق—ولم تكن من قبل حَيَّة ولا فيها رسم عين ولا فم—ونحو فلق البحر وإخراج يده بيضاء وغير ذلك، وما أتى به من الجراد<sup>١</sup> والقمل والضفادع والدم وغير ذلك ممَّا لا يقدر عليه البشر؟

فإن قالوا: موسى لم يكن مخترعاً لشيء من ذلك، وإنَّما كان يدعو ويرغب إلى الله في أن يظهر ذلك على يده؛ يقال لهم: فما أنكرتم أن تكون هذه حال عيسى وأنَّه كان يرغب إلى خالقه وربِّه ومالكه في أن يظهر الآيات على يده؟

42. وقد نطق الإنجيل بذلك، لأنَّ في الإنجيل أنَّ عيسى، عليه السلام، بكى وقال: ”رَبِّ، إن كان في مشيئتكَ أن تصرف هذه الكأس عن أحد، فاصرفها عني!“؛ وأنَّه أراد أن يحيي رجلاً<sup>٢</sup> فقال: ”يا أبي، أدعوك كما كنت أدعوك فتستجيب لي، وإنَّما أدعوك من أجل هؤلاء القوم ليعلموا“<sup>٣</sup>؛ وقال: ”يا أبي، أنا أحمدك“؛ وقال، وهو على الخشبة وقت الصلب بزعمهم: ”إلهي إلهي، لم تركتني؟“ و هذا فوق دعاء موسى وتضرَّعه وابتهاله، فوجب أنَّه عبد محبوب ومحدث مخلوق كموسى وغيره من الرسل، عليهم السلام.

فإن قالوا: كان عيسى يدعو ويرغب بهذا الدعاء على سبيل التعليم للأتباع والتلاميذ. وإلَّا فقد كان يخترع الآيات اختراعاً ويأمر أن يكون فيكون؛ قيل لهم: فما أنكرتم أن يكون دعاء موسى ورغبته إنَّما وقع على سبيل التعليم، وإلَّا فقد كان يخترع فلق البحر وإخراج اليد بيضاء وقلب العصا حَيَّة وتظليلهم بالغمام واختراع المنّ والسلوى، ويأمر بأن يكون ذلك فيكون؟ فلا يجدون لذلك مدفعاً.

<sup>١</sup>ب، ف || ص: بيضاء والجراد. <sup>٢</sup>ص، ف || ب: كهلا. <sup>٣</sup>ص، ف || ب: هؤلاء ليعلموا.

with mouth, two eyes and orifices<sup>65</sup>—it had not been a serpent before and there was no trace of eyes or mouth in it; and such as parting the sea, drawing out his hand white and other things, and his causing locusts, lice, frogs, blood and so on, which a human cannot do?

If they say: Moses was never the originator of any of this, but rather he used to pray and beseech God to show it through him; say to them: Then why do you deny that this was the case with Jesus, and that he used to beseech his Creator, Lord and Owner to show the signs through him?

42. The Gospel indeed states this, for in the Gospel is that Jesus, peace be upon him, wept and said, ‘Lord, if it is your will to take this cup away from anyone, take it from me!’;<sup>66</sup> he wanted to bring a man back to life and said, ‘Father, I call you as I have called you, answer me, though I only call you for these people, so that they might know’.<sup>67</sup> He said, ‘Father, I praise you’;<sup>68</sup> and when he was on the cross at the time of the crucifixion, according to their claim, he said, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’<sup>69</sup> This is beyond Moses’ prayer, beseeching and supplication, so it follows that he was a servant, subordinate and temporal, created like Moses and other messengers, peace be upon them.

If they say: Jesus prayed and beseeched with this prayer for the purpose of instructing the followers and disciples. He did, in fact, originate the signs completely, and ordered a thing and it was; say to them: Then why do you deny that Moses’ praying and beseeching only took place for the purpose of instructing, and that he did originate the parting of the sea, withdrawing his hand white, changing the staff into a serpent, giving them the shade of clouds, and providing manna and quails, that he ordered this to be and it was? They will not find any means of rebutting this.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>65</sup> This feature also appears in al-Ḥasan Ibn Ayyūb (quoted in Ibn Taymiyya, *Jawāb*, vol. II, p. 333.5), showing dependence on a common source.

<sup>66</sup> The translation of this prayer in al-Māturīdī, pp. 102–103 above, is almost identical and much closer than other early translations, on which cf. Thomas, ‘Miracles of Jesus’, p. 228 n. 36, and p. 230 n. 47.

<sup>67</sup> John 11.41–42.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Luke 10.21 and John 17.4, though there is no close equivalent.

<sup>69</sup> Matthew 27.46 || Mark 15.34.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. the same argument, though in starker form, in al-Māturīdī, pp. 102–105 above.

43. وإن قالوا: قولنا "مسيح" اسم لمعنيين: لاهوت، هو إله، وناسوت، هو إنسان مخلوق. فما كان من تضرّع ودعاء فإنّما وقع من الإنسان الذي هو الناسوت؛ وما كان من إحداث آية وإظهار معجزة فهو واقع من الإله دون الإنسان؛ يقال لهم: فما أنكرتم أيضاً من أن يكون "موسى" اسماً لمعنيين، إله وإنسان؟ فما كان من دعاء ورغبة فإنّه واقع من الناسوت، وما كان من اختراع آية وإبداع معجزة فإنّه من اللاهوت دون الناسوت. ولا فصل في ذلك.

44. وإن قالوا: كلّ واحد من هؤلاء الأنبياء قد أقرّ بلسانه بأنّه إنسان مخلوق وعبد مربوب مألوه مرسل من عند الله، والمسيح لم يقرّ بذلك؛ يقال لهم: وكذلك المسيح قد اعترف بأنّه نبيّ مرسل وعبد مخلوق، لأنّ الإنجيل ينطق بأنّه قال: "إني عبد الله أرسلت معلّماً"؛ وقال، "فكما بعثني أبي فكذلك أبعثكم: عمّدوا الناس وغسلوهم باسم الأب والابن والروح القدس"؛ وقال في الإنجيل: "أخرجوا بنا من هذه المدينة، فإنّ النبيّ لا يُكرم في مدينته". في نظائر هذه الإقرارات عنه كثيرة بأنّه نبيّ وعبد مرسل ومألوه مدبر، فوجب أنّه ليس بإله.

فإن قالوا: هذه الإقرارات واقعة من ناسوت المسيح دون لاهوته؛ قيل لهم: فما أنكرتم أن يكون كلّ إقرار سُمع من نبيّ بأنّه خلق وعبد ونبيّ<sup>1</sup> فإنّه إقرار بناسوته دون لاهوته؟ فهل تجدون في ذلك فصلاً؟

45. وإن قالوا: إنّما قلنا إنّ المسيح إله لأنّ الله قال في الكتب إنّّه إله وسمّاه بذلك، فقال، العذراء البتول تحمل وتلد ابناً ويدعى اسمه إلهاً؛ يقال لهم:

<sup>1</sup> ب || ص: ونبي مخلوق وعبودية ونبوّة؛ ف: ونبي بخلق وعبودية ونبوّة.

43. If they say: Our term ‘Christ’ is a term with two significances: the divine nature which is God, and the human nature which is a created human. When the beseeching and praying happened, this happened from the human who was the human nature. When signs occurred and miracles were manifest, this happened from the Divinity and not the human; say to them: Then why do you deny that ‘Moses’ as well is a term with two significances, divine and human? So when there was praying and beseeching, this happened from the human nature, and when there was originating of signs and making miracles, this came from the divine nature and not the human nature. There is no difference in this.

44. If they say: Every one of these prophets attested with his own lips that he was a created human and a servant, subordinate, with Divinity above him, sent from God, and Christ did not attest this; say to them: In the same way Christ made known that he was a prophet sent and a created servant, because the Gospel states that he said: ‘I am the servant of God, I have been sent to teach’.<sup>71</sup> And he said: ‘Just as my Father sent me, so I send you. Baptize the people and cleanse them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit’.<sup>72</sup> In the Gospel he said: ‘They have turned us out of this town. A prophet is not honoured in his town.’<sup>73</sup> There are many more like these attestations from him that he was a prophet, a servant sent as messenger, with God above him, and under direction. So he cannot have been God.

If they say: These attestations came from Christ’s human nature and not his divine nature; say to them: Then why do you deny that every attestation heard from a prophet that he was a creature, a servant and a prophet was the attestation of his human nature and not his divine nature? Will you find any difference here?

45. If they say: We have only said that Christ was divine because God says in the books that he was divine, and calls him this. He says: ‘The pure virgin is with child and will give birth to a son, and his name will be called divine’;<sup>74</sup> say to them: But God also said to Moses: ‘Behold,

---

<sup>71</sup> There is no close equivalent in the canonical Gospels.

<sup>72</sup> This is a combination of John 20.21 and Matthew 28.19.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Matthew 13.57 || Mark 6.4 || Luke 4.24; John 4.44.

<sup>74</sup> Matthew 1.23, quoting Isaiah 7.14.

فقد قال الله أيضاً لموسى، ”إنِّي قد جعلتك إلهًا لهرون وجعلتك إلهًا لفرعون“ على معنى ”أنتك مدبر له وأمر له وواجبة عليه طاعتك“. وقد كانت هذه لغة. ثمَّ يقال لهم: لمَّ يخبر الله تعالى أنَّه هو سَمَّاهُ أو يسمِّيه إلهًا، وإنَّما قال، ”يُدعى اسمه إلهًا“، فيمكن أن يكون أراد أن قومًا يغلون في تعظيمه ويدعون به بذلك ويتجاوزون به حدَّ الخلق ويكذبون في ذلك ويفترون. فمن أين لكم أن ما سُمِّي به من ذلك واجب صحيح؟ فلا يجدون إلى ذلك سبيلًا.

46. وإن هم قالوا: إنَّما قلنا إنَّ عيسى إله وإنَّ الكلمة اتَّحدت به لأنَّه وُلد لا من فعل، وليس كذلك من تقدَّم<sup>1</sup> من الرسل؛ فيقال لهم: فيجب أن يكون آدم، عليه السلام، إلهًا لأنَّه وُجد لا من ذكر ولا أنثى. فهو أبعد عن صفة المحدث، لأنَّه لم يحوه بطن مريم ولا غيره ولا كان من معدن وكَد ولا موضع حمل له. وكذلك يجب أن تكون حواء ربًّا لأنَّها خلقت من ضلع آدم من غير ذكر ولا أنثى، فهو أبعد. وكذلك المطالبة عليهم في وجوب كون الملائكة آلهة لأنَّهم لا من ذكر ولا أنثى ولا على وجه التبنّي.

47. وإن قالوا: إنَّما وجب القضاء على ربوبية المسيح لأنَّه قال في الإنجيل، وهو الصادق في قوله: ”أنا وأبي واحد، ومن رآني فقد رأى أبي“؛ يقال

<sup>1</sup> ص || ب: ذكرتموه؛ ف: ذكرتم.



I have made you a God to Aaron and I have made you a God to Pharaoh',<sup>75</sup> in the sense 'You will have power over him and command over him and control over him to obey you.' And it is only language.

Then say to them: God almighty did not say that he had named him or would name him God, but only said, 'His name will be called divine'. It is possible he may have meant that people would exaggerate his greatness and would call him this, would disregard the limit of createdness, and would lie and become neglectful in this. Where have you ascertained that it is compelling or correct to call anything by this name? They will not be able to find a way out of this.

46. If they should say: We actually say that Jesus was divine and that the Word united with him because he was born without the involvement of a sire, and this is not the case with preceding messengers; say to them: Then Adam, peace be upon him, must have been divine, because he came into being without involvement of a male or a female. So he must be more remote from the attribute of temporality because neither Mary's womb nor any other enclosed him, he did not come from the source of child-birth, and no location bore him. In the same way Eve must have been Lord, because she was created from Adam's rib without male or female, and this is even more remote.<sup>76</sup>

The demand on them concerning the angels having to be divine is the same, since they are not from male or female or according to adoption.<sup>77</sup>

47. If they say: Christ must be judged to have Lordship because he said in the Gospel, and he was truthful in his words, 'I and my Father are one, and anyone who has seen me has seen my Father',<sup>78</sup> say to

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Exodus 7.1.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Q 3.59. The comparison between Jesus and Adam, or Adam and Eve, with respect to their births was commonplace from the mid third/ninth century on; cf. Thomas, 'Miracles of Jesus', pp. 221–225.

<sup>77</sup> The significance of this last reference is not obvious in the context of this argument. It may preserve a trace of a comparison suggested by Christians in the early third/ninth century and preserved by al-Jāhiz, which was that Jesus might be accepted as Son of God in adoptionist terms by analogy with Abraham being accepted as Friend of God; cf. the reference in al-Māturīdī on pp. 110–111 above and the sources cited there. If this is the case, the fragmentary mention is sadly too brief to reconstruct what the original may have been.

<sup>78</sup> This is a combination of John 10.30 and 14.9.

لهم: ما أنكرتم أن يكون معنى ذلك أن "من أطاعني فقد أطاع أبي، أي مرسلي ومعلّمي الحكمة، ومن عصاني فقد عصاه"؟ فيكون معنى "أبي" أي "إنّه معلّمي ومرسلي". وقوله "ومن رأيي فقد رأي أبي" معناه: "فكأنّه قد رآه وسمع حكمته وأمره ونهيه". ولا بدّ من هذا التأويل، لأنّه لو كان هو وأبوه واحداً لوجب أن تكون الولادة والحمل والقتل والصلب والأكل والشرب والحركة، الجاري كلّ ذلك عليه، جارياً على الأب. وإذا كان هو متّحداً بالجسد وجب أن يكون الأب متّحداً به. وهذا كلّ ترك لقولهم إن ركبوه، فوجب أن يكون تأويل القول على ما ذكرناه.

48. وإن قالوا: إنّما وجبت إلهية المسيح لأنّه قال، وهو صادق في قوله: "أنا قبل إبراهيم". وهو إنسان من ولد إبراهيم، فعلمنا بذلك أنّه قبل إبراهيم بلاهوته وابنه بناسوته؛ يقال لهم: ما أنكرتم أن يكون المراد بقوله: "أنا قبل إبراهيم" أي "كثيراً من ديني وشرعي كان متعبداً به ومشروعاً قبل إبراهيم على لسان بعض الرسل"؟ أو ما أنكرتم أن يكون أراد بقوله "أنا قبل إبراهيم"، "مكتوباً<sup>2</sup> عند الله"، أو "أنا معروف قبل إبراهيم عند قوم من الملائكة"، أو "أنا مبعوث إلى المحشر قبل إبراهيم"؟ إذ لا يجوز إثبات الربوبية لجسد أكل الطعام ومشى في الأسواق.

49. والقول بأنّ اللاهوت اتّحد به قول بعيد يحتمل التأويل. وقد قال سليمان، عليه السلام، في كتابه: "أنا قبل الدنيا، وكنت مع الله حيث مدّ الأرض، وكنت صبيّاً ألعب بين يدي الله". ولم يجب أن يكون سليمان قبل الدنيا ومع الله سبحانه حيث مدّ الأرض بلاهوته، وأن يكون ابن داود بناسوته.

<sup>1</sup>ص، ف || ب: قبل إبراهيم أنّ كثيراً. <sup>2</sup>ص، ف || ب: إبراهيم أي مكتوباً.

them: Why do you deny that the meaning of this is ‘Anyone who obeys me obeys my Father, which is to say the One who sent me and has taught me wisdom, and whoever disobeys me disobeys him’? So the meaning of ‘my Father’ will be ‘He who taught me and sent me’, and the meaning of his words, ‘Anyone who has seen me has seen my Father’, will be, ‘It is as though he has seen him and heard his wisdom, and his command and prohibition’. This has to be the interpretation, because if he and his Father were one, the birth, being carried, being killed and crucified, eating, drinking and moving, all that happened to him, would have had to happen to the Father. And if he was united with the body, the Father would have had to be united with it. But all of this is to abandon their teaching, if they pursue it. So the interpretation of the words must be what we have given.

48. If they say: Christ must be divine because he said, and he was truthful in his words: ‘I was before Abraham’.<sup>79</sup> He was a human from the descendants of Abraham, so we know by this that in his divine nature he was before Abraham and in his human nature he was his son; say to them: Why do you deny that the intention of his words, ‘I was before Abraham’ was ‘Many things from my religion and law were given for worship and imparted as lawful before Abraham through the mouths of messengers’? Or why do you deny that by his words, ‘I was before Abraham’ he meant ‘written in the presence of God’, or ‘I was known before Abraham among some of the angels’, or ‘I was sent to all people before Abraham’? For it is not permissible to affirm lordship of a physical being who ate food and walked through the market-places.

49. The teaching that the divine nature united with him is a far-fetched teaching which demands interpretation. Solomon, peace be upon him, says in his book, ‘I was before the world, and I was with God when he stretched out the earth. As a child I used to play in the presence of God’.<sup>80</sup> It does not follow that Solomon was before the world, and in his divine nature was with God, blessed be he, when he stretched out the earth, and in his human nature was David’s son.

---

<sup>79</sup> John 8.58.

<sup>80</sup> Proverbs 8.22–30.

فإن قالوا: أراد أنَّ "اسمي عند الله قبل خلق الدنيا وفي علمه وعنده حيث مدَّ الأرض"، أو "العلم بإرسالي وتمليكي"، أو غير ذلك من التأويلات؛ قيل لهم: مثله فيما احتجَّوا به، ولا جواب عنه.

If they say: He meant, 'My name was with God before the creation of the world, and in his knowledge, and in his presence when he stretched out the earth', or 'the knowledge that I was to be sent and given overlordship', or other interpretations beside this; say to them: There are similar things in what they claim. And there is no reply to it.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### ‘ABD AL-JABBĀR IBN AḤMAD AL-HAMADHĀNĪ

The fourth and by far the longest of these texts comes from Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī al-Asadābādī, the leading Mu‘tazilī scholar of his day and the first whose works are extensively known in their original form. Like al-Bāqillānī, he was a *qāḍī* as well as a theologian, though his career was by no means smooth. He died out of favour in 415/1025.<sup>1</sup>

As his name indicates, ‘Abd al-Jabbār was born in Asadābād near Hamadhān in Iran. Since he is said to have lived into his nineties, he was probably born sometime in the 320/930s, about the same time as al-Bāqillānī and during the latter years of al-Māturīdī. He studied law under scholars in many towns in the Iranian region, and then in 346/958 he went to Baṣra, where he studied Mu‘tazilī *kalām* under Ibrāhīm al-‘Ayyāsh, a student of Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā‘ī, before moving to Baghdad to study with another of this master’s students, Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Baṣrī, to whom he remained devoted until the latter’s death in 369/980.

It was through Abū ‘Abdallāh that ‘Abd al-Jabbār entered public life, when Abū ‘Abdallāh secured for him a post under al-Šāhib Ibn ‘Abbād, the vizier of the Būyid ruler Mu‘ayyid al-Dawla. Ibn ‘Abbād made him chief *qāḍī* of Rayy, and the two appear to have cooperated in harmony there for some years, during which ‘Abd al-Jabbār enjoyed celebrity status which culminated in his being recognised as the leading Mu‘tazilī theologian of his time.

This came to an end in 385/995 when Ibn ‘Abbād died and the Būyid ruler Fakhr al-Dawla dismissed ‘Abd al-Jabbār from his position. The circumstances of this dismissal are not entirely clear, though there is some suspicion among his early biographers that the *qāḍī* had come

---

<sup>1</sup> For accounts of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s biography, and references to original sources, see J.R.T.M. Peters, *God’s Created Speech, a study in the speculative theology of the Mu‘tazilī Qāḍī l-Qudāt Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Jabbār bn Aḥmad al-Hamadānī*, Leiden, 1976, pp. 6–25; G.S. Reynolds, *A Muslim Theologian in the Sectarian Milieu, ‘Abd al-Jabbār and the Critique of Christian Origins*, Leiden, 2004, pp. 41–63.

to enjoy his status so much that he no longer acknowledged his benefactor. When Ibn ‘Abbād died, he refused to credit his piety with the expected pronouncement of blessing, and the ruler then used this as an excuse to get rid of a man who essentially had allowed success to go to his head.

For the remainder of his life ‘Abd al-Jabbār lived in private. He continued to teach and write, but he no longer profited from the heady success of his most vigorous years.

The titles of nearly seventy works by ‘Abd al-Jabbār are known,<sup>2</sup> and his biographer Abū al-Sa‘d al-Jishumī reports that he wrote an enormous 400,000 pages in all.<sup>3</sup> These included commentaries on earlier theological works, particularly those of the masters Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā‘ī and his son Abū Hāshim, legal works, answers to questions sent from parts of the Islamic empire, critiques of works by Muslim opponents of the Mu‘tazila, including *Naqd al-Luma‘* (*Criticism of ‘The Flashes’*), Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī’s fundamental theological work, and also a few works specifically against non-Muslim groups, among which his *Sharḥ al-Ārā’* (*Commentary on ‘The Opinions’*), Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī’s unfinished expose of a number of religions entitled *K. al-ārā’ wa-al-diyānāt* (*Opinions and Religions*), was particularly remembered. This work was evidently in the *maqālāt* tradition of descriptive compendia that is known from such third/ninth century authors as Abū al-‘Abbās al-Īrānshāhī and Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq. Among its accounts of Indian religions, Greek philosophical systems and dualist sects, it also portrayed Christian beliefs in a way that clearly impressed ‘Abd al-Jabbār.<sup>4</sup>

But both al-Nawbakhtī’s original and ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s commentary are lost. Of all the works he wrote, fourteen by G.S. Reynolds’ estimation are now accessible either in their original form or as part of other compositions.<sup>5</sup> Of these, two have extensive discussions on Christianity and reveal something of their author’s attitude, the *Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-al-‘adl* (*The Summa on divine Oneness and Justice*), the systematic theology that is discussed in detail below, and the *Tathbūt dalā’il al-nubuwwa* (*The Confirmation of the Proofs of Prophethood*), a rather differ-

<sup>2</sup> A list is given by ‘A.-K. ‘Uthmān, *Qāḍī al-quḍāt ‘Abd al-Jabbār*, Beirut, 1967, pp. 55–72.

<sup>3</sup> Reynolds, *Muslim Theologian*, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār (attr.), *Sharḥ al-‘uṣūl al-khamsa*, ed. ‘A.-K. ‘Uthmān, Cairo, 1965, p. 291.

<sup>5</sup> Reynolds, *Muslim Theologian*, pp. 61–62, n. 213.



ent work which defends the authenticity of Muḥammad as prophet and messenger of God.<sup>6</sup>

Part of this defence is an extended demonstration of how the Prophet's refutation of the beliefs of Christianity prove his own authenticity. This forms a substantial portion of the work as a whole, and it has little of the strict organisation of ‘Abd al-Jabbār's systematic theological treatises. Reynolds, who has analysed it in detail,<sup>7</sup> identifies four main themes: the composition of the Bible, the contents of the Bible, the history of the church,<sup>8</sup> and Christian practice.<sup>9</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār brings in a wide variety of anecdotal and circumstantial evidence to support his overall contention that Christianity has abandoned its original purity which Christ originally brought, and that the historical forms of the faith bear little resemblance to its first proclamation that is now renewed and confirmed by Muḥammad. He confronts Christians with alternative versions of incidents to the ones they hold, and effectively challenges them to accept what he adduces as he chips away at the recognisable accounts promoted in the churches<sup>10</sup> by showing they lack consistency or rational integrity.

According to ‘Abd al-Jabbār's own indication, the *Tathbīt* was written in 385/995, five years after his greatest work, the *Mughnī*, was completed. This earlier work was an ambitious undertaking by any account, a systematic presentation of Mu‘tazilī theology framed according to their two main principles of divine oneness and justice, taking in the current issues in religious discourse of the time, all structured into a coherent description of the being of God in himself, the nature of his relationship with the world, and the appropriate forms of human con-

<sup>6</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt dalā’il al-nubuwwa*, ed. ‘A.-K. ‘Uthmān, Beirut, 1966.

<sup>7</sup> Reynolds, *Muslim Theologian*, pp. 80–125 and appendix 2; see also G.S. Reynolds and S.K. Samir, *The Critique of Christian Origins: Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār's (d. 415/1025) Islamic Essay on Christianity in his Tathbīt dalā’il al-nubuwwa (Confirmation of the Proofs of Prophecy)*, Provo UT, forthcoming.

<sup>8</sup> See on this S.M. Stern, ‘Abd al-Jabbār's Account of how Christ's Religion was falsified by the Adoption of Roman Customs’, *Journal of Theological Studies* new series 19, 1968, pp. 128–185.

<sup>9</sup> See on this G.S. Reynolds, ‘A New Source for Church History? Eastern Christianity in ‘Abd al-Jabbār's (415/1025) *Confirmation*’, *Oriens Christianus* 86, 2002, pp. 46–68; *idem*, ‘A Medieval Islamic Polemic against certain Practices and Doctrines of the East Syrian Church: Introduction, Excerpts and Commentary’, in D. Thomas, ed., *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule, Church Life and Scholarship in ‘Abbasid Iraq*, Leiden, 2003, pp. 215–230.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. S.M. Stern, ‘Quotations from Apocryphal Gospels in ‘Abd al-Jabbār’, *Journal of Theological Studies* new series 18, 1967, pp. 34–57.

duct in the moral context in which they are set. It is divided into twenty parts, each of them a full discussion of the principles and details of the topic under examination. As a whole, the work is not only an impressive example of the complexity and sophistication of rationalist theology in the fourth/tenth century but, thanks to its copious references to earlier thinkers, a mine of the lost thought of the earlier Muʿtazila and their opponents.<sup>11</sup>

ʿAbd al-Jabbār himself supplies information about the composition of the *Mughnī*. He began, he says, to dictate it in 360/970–971 and finished it twenty years later in 380/990–991 in the presence of his patron the vizier Ibn ʿAbbād.<sup>12</sup> And, as can be seen from the contents of the refutation of Christianity, it bears traces of successive contributions and reworkings, presumably as different works that treated the topics distributed through its parts became available to ʿAbd al-Jabbār. The *Mughnī* is almost as much a compilation of earlier thought as a composition of its author’s own insight and acumen.

The refutation of Christianity, as will be shown below, is strategically placed in Part 5 of the *Mughnī* together with refutations of dualist faiths and after the elaborate discussions in Parts 1–4 of the contingent nature of the phenomenal world, the existence of an eternal Originator, the nature of this Being, and what must be affirmed and denied about him. It clearly forms an integral part of this discussion on God, because it is followed at the end of Part 5 by a summary discussion of all that has preceded in the form of an exposition of the names of God.<sup>13</sup>

The structure of the refutation of Christianity is easy to grasp in broad outline. It begins with an introductory description of the main beliefs of the Christians (§§ 1–9), and continues with attacks on the Trinity (§§ 10–43) and the different forms of Incarnation held by the Christian denominations (§§ 44–82). It thus resembles al-Nāshīʾ al-Akbar’s refutation from nearly a century earlier, and even more Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq’s mid third/ninth century *Radd ʿalā al-thalāth firaq min al-Naṣārā*, which it makes use of though without explicit acknowledgement. Within these three main divisions, however, there is rather less clarity and even a few signs that arguments may not have been fully completed.

<sup>11</sup> See Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, pp. 25–35.

<sup>12</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. XX/2, pp. 257ff.

<sup>13</sup> Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, pp. 29–30.

The introductory description of Christian beliefs begins with, or more appropriately is prefaced by, a quotation from a lost work of one of the Mu‘tazilī masters Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā‘ī, which itself must have formed the introduction to that work. In a few brief paragraphs, this outlines the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation in a schematic form without any mention of the names of the denominations that are linked with the variant versions (§1). ‘Abd al-Jabbār presumably includes this out of respect for the father of his teacher’s teacher, though he makes little of it in ensuing discussions. Starting his description proper, he states that he will set out beliefs according to what Christians generally agree and disagree on, and, in typically Mu‘tazilī manner, according to what can be understood from the irrational teachings they promote. He makes no secret of his disdain for the doctrines he is about to examine.

He goes on to name the main Christian denominations (§2), and then to summarise briefly their agreed teaching on the Trinity and Incarnation (§3), followed by a much longer account of the points on which Christians disagree, over the Trinity (§4), and then the action through which the divine and human natures united in Christ (§§5–7). He concludes with particular variations about the crucifixion (§8), the worship of Christ, and a series of minority views about the Uniting (§9). While he mentions the names of denominations at various points, he is evidently more interested in the concepts involved in these interpretations than in their links with their originators. This points to an intention to examine and expose weaknesses in ideas in a work written for Muslim readers rather than to carry an attack to opponents in a continuing discussion with Christians.

‘Abd al-Jabbār begins the first part of his refutation, against the Trinity, by arguing that if the three hypostases are only terminological distinctions they are not real, and if they are real they must be identical without differentiation of any kind (§10). The latter alternative leads into a multitude of contradictions about the characteristics of the three hypostases that early Mu‘tazilī masters identified (§11), and also to the point where the Christians must acknowledge three separate Divinities, whether they deny that the hypostases are formally distinct entities (§12), or acknowledge this (§13–15).

This first series of arguments relates to the relationship between the substance and the hypostases. The refutation now moves on to the logical fallacy that if Christians claim that God is three and one then he must be both internally differentiated and uniform (§16), and to

arguments from Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī that if the hypostases are identified as attributes there must be more than three because God’s attributes are more than this (§17). And it is disingenuous to prioritise two of these attributes above others because there is no firm basis for this (§18). Similarly, Abū ‘Alī compelled them to accept that if God is an agent then all three hypostases must equally be agents (§19), and also to admit a further series of contradictions that expose the impoverishment of the doctrine (§20–21).

These intricate arguments, that undisguisedly involve both references to principles that have been established earlier in the *Mughnī* and concepts native to *kalām*, form ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s overall criticism of the doctrine. In them he shows in terms of the doctrine itself and of the theological framework he employs throughout the work that the doctrine is unsustainable in any reasonable way of thinking. As an addendum to this series of arguments, he turns to the Melkites who offer a particular teaching that, as he summarises it, while the hypostases are not other than the substance it is not identical with them, and he lists the difficulties that arise from this claim (§22–23). And then he deals with the claim that the Son is the Father’s articulated speech, showing again the logical impossibility this entails if the Christians maintain that the Son is eternal and uncreated (§24).

Turning to an argument that is also treated by al-Bāqillānī,<sup>14</sup> that since all existing things are either substances or accidents, according to philosophical rather than theological definitions, God must be substance because substances are independent while accidents are not (§25), ‘Abd al-Jabbār shows in a similar way to his Ash‘arī fellow-Muslim that since substances in theological terms are within the contingent order God must be subject to all the same conditions as them (§§26–27). He continues with a succession of minor arguments against the defence that the Trinitarian number is perfect because it combines the even and odd (§28), that unless God is father he is incomplete (§29), and the analogies of the fire and its heat, the sun and its radiance, and the human and its characteristics (§§28–31). These Christian claims and the Muslim rejections of them are familiar from earlier polemical works, some of the Christian points even antedating Islam, and the representations by ‘Abd al-Jabbār have the character of summaries without attribution. His references to anonymous Christian individuals<sup>15</sup> suggest

<sup>14</sup> Above, pp. 144–147, §1.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. §§28, 30.

that he is well aware of current apologetic, but his refusal to engage personally with these proponents shows his main aim is to demonstrate to his Muslim audience the weakness of the claims that Christians make, rather than to drive home to Christians themselves the problems they raise for their doctrine.

Following this series of minor points, ‘Abd al-Jabbār next turns to an argument that was first reported by Abū ‘Uthmān al-Jāḥiẓ more than a century before his time and had become a celebrated issue of contention in the meanwhile. This is the subtle point put forward by an anonymous group of Christians, that if Muslims will allow that Abraham was intimate with God by being called his friend, as the Qur’ān declares, then Jesus can be allowed to have the same intimacy by being called God’s son, though in an adopted and not begotten sense (§31). The difficulty hidden in this comparison is that if Muslims deny the intimacy between God and Jesus they must deny the intimacy between God and Abraham, but if they allow it, even in the sense of adoption, they contradict the Qur’ān in conceding that Jesus was Son of God.

‘Abd al-Jabbār warily begins by showing that an adoptive sonship weakens the Christian teaching that God is eternal Father, and by questioning the whole notion of this relationship between God and Jesus in adoptive terms (§32), and then moves to the comparison between the adopted Jesus and Abraham as friend. Here he employs arguments put forward by al-Jāḥiẓ, whom he duly acknowledges, that the true meaning of ‘friend’ with respect to Abraham is more of one who is dependent than intimate, and thus the comparison with Jesus does not apply (§§33–35).

Finally in this section on the Trinity, he deals with another series of minor claims, that the virgin birth is indicative of Jesus’ divinity (§36), and that sayings attributed to Jesus in the Gospels show his divine Sonship (§37). He finds ready answers to these familiar polemical elements, expanding in his reply to the Gospel sayings upon the changing valencies of individual terms as they are transferred from one language to another, and upon the metaphorical nature of language (§§38–42). He concludes his refutation with the confident statement that all the arguments he has adduced disprove the doctrinal formulas put forward by the Christians, and show that the doctrine inevitably depicts God as a body, which by definition he cannot be (§43).

It can readily be seen that this great assemblage of arguments, some from named Mu‘tazilī authorities, others from anonymous theological

tradition, and some by ‘Abd al-Jabbār himself, is presented as a set of reassuring proofs for Muslims, and especially those who accept the portrayal of God that has been given in the preceding parts of the *Mughnī*. Christian voices, while heard from time to time, are distant and anonymous, and their explanations and defences are reduced to propositional formulas that are then subjected to the rigorous testing of *kalām* method. There is no suggestion that they come directly from Christians themselves, or that these replies have been tested in live debate with Christians.

‘Abd al-Jabbār now turns to the third part of his refutation, the attack on the doctrine of the Uniting of the divine and human natures in Christ. He begins with a general summary of the forms in which the doctrine is presented by Christians and can be understood, showing the logical possibilities that attach to each alternative (§§44–45). The point he comes back to repeatedly here is that it is impossible for the one, eternal God to enter into an intimate relationship with a created being. In a series of brief theorems he more or less satisfies himself that the doctrine is unviable no matter how it is expressed, but he nevertheless goes on to investigate the various interpretations, always maintaining the same formally propositional approach as in his refutation of the Trinity.

In three separate chapters, he first refutes the claim that the act of Uniting took the form not of bodily union but of conformity of volitions. If the volitions of the divine and human natures remained separate, there could not have been total conformity because there would inevitably have been differences of desire between them, the human could not have known all that the divine knows and so could not have willed it, and anyway the same would have applied to other prophets since there is no reason to give Jesus any priority over them (§46–47). If it is claimed that the divine volition became the human volition, this is disproved by the fact that the two volitions function in different ways, the divine from God’s being itself and the human from an attribute that is separate from the being. In addition, since there can be no distinction between Christ and other created beings, the divine volition would have had to become the volition of all beings. This itself would necessitate the divine volition acting in contradictory ways, as one creature knew something and another did not (§48). Thirdly, if it is claimed that Jesus’ volition became God’s volition, this is again disproved by the different ways in which the two volitions operate (§49). Clearly, ‘Abd al-Jabbār examines the claim according to *kalām* logic and

shows how it fails scrutiny in light of the ontology of divine and human being that is constructed in this logic. He shows no hesitation about doing this, as though the Christian teachings were developed according to the same principles that he and fellow theologians observe.

In the following chapters ‘Abd al-Jabbār examines a series of metaphorical descriptions of the Uniting. These are first listed in Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq’s refutation,<sup>16</sup> where they are clearly identified as explanations rather than definitions of the doctrine. ‘Abd al-Jabbār, however, much like al-Bāqillānī,<sup>17</sup> treats them as fundamental statements.

He first treats the statement that the divine nature united with the human nature in the form of mixing and close adjacency, and dismisses it on the grounds that it would impute material and temporal characteristics to God. In an intriguing excursus, he debates with an anonymous interlocutor who defends the statement by comparing it with the Muslim declaration that God is everywhere though not adjacent to material things. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s rejoinder to this attempt to use Muslim concepts to explain the Christian doctrine is that Muslims regard references to God’s omnipresence in figurative terms though Christians must take their statement literally, and anyway if God came into intimate adjacency with Jesus he could have done the same with other prophets. And the evidence of Jesus’ miracles does not indicate a special closeness because God can effect miracles through a prophet without uniting with him. In a few brief sentences here, ‘Abd al-Jabbār translates the old Christian claim that the miracles prove Jesus’ divinity into *kalām* terms by showing that if anything is proved divine by miracles, then it is the actual locus of the miracle rather than the human prophet. And so the blind man’s eye or the corpse brought back to life have more claim to be united with the divine than Jesus himself (§§50–52).

Next in this group of chapters he examines the statement that the act of Uniting took the form of the divine inhering in the human. He rejects it on *a priori* grounds that this kind of adjacency requires one thing to be within another, which is impossible for God (§53). Then, in another curious turn, an anonymous voice seeks to compare this form of the Uniting with the teaching of Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī about the mode of existence of the Qur’ān: it exists on a page or in the mouth, though it has not come into existence or been transferred there. But ‘Abd al-

<sup>16</sup> Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 70–71, §11.

<sup>17</sup> Above, pp. 170–175, §22.

Jabbār easily counters this by arguing that in Abū ‘Alī’s terms the word still occurs in a particular location and through an agency. This cannot apply to God (§54).

The interlocutor attempts other forms of statement that will allow the human and divine to be adjacent, but ‘Abd al-Jabbār rejects each because they are irrational or restrict the divine in physical terms (§§55–56). These include the metaphor of the divine appearing in the human like a face in a mirror or a seal imprinted in clay, but he shows that these are inappropriate (§§57–58).

The Christians continue to suggest ways in which the divine could inhere in the human Jesus without being subject to the laws of physical things, but ‘Abd al-Jabbār maintains his point that this is not possible within rational ways of understanding (§§59–65). Again, the whole claim of Uniting as inhering is taken into *kalām* conceptuality, where it can succinctly be shown that the divine nature would have to become subject to physical laws. What is fascinating to see here is Christians, who are evidently Nestorians, trying to use these laws to their own advantage, like the Christians known to al-Bāqillānī.<sup>18</sup> They do not appear to know *kalām* method well enough to get far in their attempt, but nevertheless they are aware that they must make the attempt, and they have enough knowledge to begin to do so.

In the next chapter ‘Abd al-Jabbār examines the Jacobite claim that the two substances actually became one in the Uniting. For him this is impossible in principle because two things cannot become one thing. But putting this objection aside, this would mean the human nature ceased to be human, which deprives the Christian doctrine of its purpose. Alternatively, it would require the resultant being to be either human or divine, though both are equally improbable (§§66–67).

Pressing the case further, ‘Abd al-Jabbār raises the matter of Jesus’ death according to this Jacobite Christological model. Since the two natures became one, this would mean that the divine nature separated from the human, which shows that it was not one with it at all, or alternatively that this divine being denied himself by succumbing to death (§68). Clinically and concisely, ‘Abd al-Jabbār dismantles Christian belief, showing at this point the same thorough acquaintance with Christian doctrine that gave Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq his mastery over his opponents a century earlier.

---

<sup>18</sup> Above, pp. 164–167, §§17–18.



After demonstrating in another brief but devastating proof that if the Son alone among the Persons united with the human Jesus he must be a distinct God (§69), ‘Abd al-Jabbār again presents arguments from his Mu‘tazilī master Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā‘ī. He summarises a series of points which Abū ‘Alī presumably made at some length (maybe intending to return and expand them) against both the doctrines of the Uniting and the Trinity, all of them showing that these doctrines make no sense in rational debate (§§70–72).

Next, the authenticity of Christian ‘books’ cannot be relied upon, because the deceitfulness of their authors is easily demonstrated. Thus, what these books say about the crucifixion has no greater authority than the Qur’ān’s denial of it (§73–74). Furthermore, these scriptures are not the source of the doctrines of the denominations, but rather they derive these from their leaders without understanding. An illustration of this is the argument presented by Theodore Abū Qurra that God must have a son of his own substance because God must have mastery and can only ultimately be master of a being who is identical to him. Apart from the nonsense in this, it does not provide the basis of a proof for a Trinitarian Godhead because it only involves two divine beings (§§75–77).

There are further fascinating hints here of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s engagement with Christian sources. His detached style of composition makes it difficult to say what form this took, though his reference to Theodore Abū Qurra as ‘Qurra’ without any other elements of the name maybe suggests that he was employing indirect sources, probably by Muslims, rather than the Melkite bishop’s works themselves.

In the last chapter of this refutation ‘Abd al-Jabbār turns to the issue of the Christians’ worship of Christ. As in his earlier arguments, he rules this out on the principle that the act of Uniting could not have taken place and so Christ was not divine. But in addition, worship should be reserved for the One who is the origin of all favours, not for intermediary beings, and thus not for the human Christ (§§78–79).

Further consequences of the Christians’ claim are that the human Christ worshipped God and so cannot be worshipped himself (§80), and that the divine nature alone and not the whole of Christ should be worshipped (§81). And Christians cannot base their worship of Christ on his mediating activity and the grace he gives, because the same must be true of other prophets. Christ’s favours may outweigh those of others, but they are not different in kind (§82). And lastly, all the

arguments by which Christians try to show that the Qur'ān contains erroneous teachings can be shown to be specious (§82).

The great difference between the Muslim 'Abd al-Jabbār and his Christian opponents is brought out more openly here than almost anywhere else in the refutation. For at one point in the exchange the Christians show that they base their worship of Christ on his atoning death to gain salvation for all humankind. They are quoted as saying: 'We worship Christ...because he is the mediator between us and the divine nature according to what we know of him' (§82),<sup>19</sup> and speaking about the grace that is given through him. But 'Abd al-Jabbār, evidently following the Qur'ān's denial that Christ died, passes over this without apparently heeding, and argues simply that Christ's favour is not essentially different from that given by other prophets. In this single demonstration of misunderstanding the general difference between the two sides is brought into the open, and their striving to gain common ground set in painful tension.

This exchange over the legitimacy of worshipping Christ and accompanying minor points brings the whole refutation of Christianity to a close. The intricate detail in argument throughout the examination of both the Trinity and Incarnation shows 'Abd al-Jabbār's deep concern to disprove as many interpretations put forward by Christians as he can find. But it also raises the question of what his intention was in these long and searching analyses. The answer is given at the start of his description of Christian doctrines and again at the beginning of his refutation of the Uniting, that he is treating what can be understood of Christian doctrine according to reason,<sup>20</sup> in other words according to the framework he can fit over it based on his own theological presuppositions. This is a work of theological correction rather than a debate with opponents who speak for themselves and can defend their own positions. When Christian voices are heard they are usually muted and monotone, as though recorded from intermediaries rather than directly. For 'Abd al-Jabbār is not primarily using these contrary arguments as targets that help him resist the threat of Christianity—that is nowhere near the true intention of the *Mughnī*. Rather, they are examples he holds up to his Muslim audience to show them what happens when the simple truth of the Muslim belief in God is left behind. The elegance of reason is then fractured, and all manner of incoherence and incon-

<sup>19</sup> Pp. 372–375 below.

<sup>20</sup> See §2 and §44 on pp. 228–229 and 302–303 below.

sistency is admitted leading to the point at which the clear perception of what God is and is not like must be abandoned. This refutation of Christianity, together with the preceding refutation of dualism, is thus a cautionary excursus that both shows the result of veering away from Muslim and Mu‘tazilī teachings, and also confirms the claim that these teachings alone provide sound, rational means of understanding God and the character that is his reality.

The positioning of these elaborate arguments in the structure of the *Mughnī* shows graphically how they serve this apologetic purpose. This structure is much easier to discern than with the treatises of al-Māturīdī and al-Bāqillānī that are discussed above, because ‘Abd al-Jabbār makes clear, at least in general outline, what this is. J.T.R.M. Peters sets it out according to the twenty-part division of the work as follows: Parts 1–4, the character of the world and of God; Part 5, refutations of those who deny the unity of God; Parts 6–14, God’s action; Parts 15–20, revelation.<sup>21</sup> There may be some questioning of certain details of this,<sup>22</sup> but by and large it is evidently an exposition of the two main principles of the Mu‘tazila, the oneness and the justice of God, expressed as systematic accounts of God in himself and of God in his relationship with the created order.

Like al-Bāqillānī’s *Tamhīd*, and to a lesser extent al-Māturīdī’s *Tawhīd*, the *Mughnī* has interspersed among its passages of positive doctrinal exposition refutations of non-Muslim religions, for example the dualists and Christians in Part 5, and the Jews in Part 16.<sup>23</sup> And in a work so carefully constructed as this, these positionings cannot be arbitrary. The explanation must be that, like al-Bāqillānī, ‘Abd al-Jabbār juxtaposes attacks and expositions in order to show the negative and positive sides of what he is setting out, and the ineluctable truth that only the Mu‘tazilī method of rational reflection can eventually lead to a full apprehension of reality, as far as humans are capable of this. Any variation, as is instanced in the constructions of these other faiths, leads to chaotic irrationality.

This is why ‘Abd al-Jabbār, like Muslim theologians from the third/ninth century onwards, only pays attention to the two Christian doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, leaving aside any detailed treat-

<sup>21</sup> Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, pp. 27–35.

<sup>22</sup> M. Elkaisy-Friemuth, *God and Humans in Islamic Thought, ‘Abd al-Jabbār, Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī*, London, 2006, pp. 24–25.

<sup>23</sup> *Ijāz al-Qur’ān*, ed. A. al-Khulī, Cairo, 1960, pp. 97–142.

ment of the atonement or other beliefs. These are the two doctrines that present alternatives to Muslim *tawḥīd*, and in refuting them ‘Abd al-Jabbār strengthens and sustains his own doctrine.

In this respect he follows a well-trodden path. And he indicates openly in a number of places his indebtedness to a number of scholars, and thus indirectly intimates his borrowing of their methods and presuppositions. At least this can be assumed, though since the works he draws on are not all extant it cannot be ascertained beyond doubt.

The first of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s sources was the work of Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī (d. 303/915–916) which he quotes at the very start of his refutation and at a number of later points.<sup>24</sup> Abū ‘Alī, as the father of Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī, who was the teacher of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s own teachers Ibrāhīm Ibn ‘Ayyāsh (d. 386/996) and Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Baṣrī (d. 369/980), and as the foremost Mu‘tazilī scholar in the generations preceding ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s own,<sup>25</sup> would hold a place of special veneration. But one must assume that his arguments feature prominently in the *Mughnī* attack primarily because they have proved sustained and cogent against any efforts to dispute them, rather than because of their authorship. ‘Abd al-Jabbār gives no signal of a title for this work (nor even, it must be said, that the arguments he quotes and summarises all come from one work), but it is presumably the same one that he mentions in the *Tathbūt*.<sup>26</sup>

If the distribution of references to arguments from this work given in the *Mughnī* fairly represents its contents, this earlier refutation resembled ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s own in comprising a descriptive introduction followed by groups of arguments against the Trinity and Incarnation. Of course, there were many other anti-Christian refutations structured along these lines at this time, so it cannot comfortably be claimed that Abū ‘Alī’s work was the direct inspiration for ‘Abd al-Jabbār attack. But it would certainly have informed his thinking about his composition, and may have strengthened his decision to follow the generally acknowledged structure. Whether it influenced any local elements, such as the unprecedented choice of Christological models examined in the refutation of the Incarnation, can only be a matter of speculation, though given the fact that the arguments which ‘Abd al-Jabbār

<sup>24</sup> See Thomas, ‘Mu‘tazilī Response’, pp. 279–313.

<sup>25</sup> See Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *K. ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazila*, pp. 80–85.

<sup>26</sup> *Tathbūt*, p. 198.14.

attributes to Abū ‘Alī by name are all clearly grouped together,<sup>27</sup> this seems unlikely. Within the overall range of the *Mughnī*, these arguments feature as one set among a number of others and do not have the appearance of a controlling source.

The same is true of the other source named by ‘Abd al-Jabbār, the mid-third/ninth century Mu‘tazilī known for his literary style Abū ‘Uthmān al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869). ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to him three times,<sup>28</sup> and makes use of the particular argument from his *Radd ‘alā al-Naṣārā* in which he and his teacher Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām respond to the Christian comparison between Jesus as adopted Son of God and Abraham as friend of God (Q 4.125).<sup>29</sup> Since this was almost certainly known to al-Māturīdī,<sup>30</sup> it had evidently become a significant element of the Muslim approach to Christianity by the fourth/tenth century, presumably because its subtlety caused a deal of discomfort. Again, ‘Abd al-Jabbār cites the arguments of these two illustrious predecessors, comments upon them himself, and moves on.

‘Abd al-Jabbār also cites ‘our masters’, *shuyūkhunā*, in five places,<sup>31</sup> though he never enlarges on who they may have been. They could have been his immediate teachers, including Ibrāhīm Ibn ‘Ayyāsh and Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Baṣrī, although neither he nor any other authorities attribute any anti-Christian refutations to either of them. It is equally likely that he is referring in this general way to what may be called the received tradition of anti-Christian polemical arguments among Mu‘tazilī scholars in his time. Thus, the arguments reported from this group of anonymous individuals may include points made by the great Mu‘tazilī thinkers of the early third/ninth century in an elaborated and developed form.

The sets of arguments attributed to the earlier Mu‘tazila are predictably rational and clinical. In the first they show that if the Person of the Son is identical with the Father and the Father has a Son, then the Son must also have a son and that son a son *ad infinitum* (§11, also §25). Further, if the Father is a Divinity, the Son and Spirit must also be Divinities in their own right because they are identical with him (§12). It is also irrational to identify one and three as the same thing (§13), and

<sup>27</sup> Thomas, ‘Mu‘tazilī Response’, pp. 286–301.

<sup>28</sup> Below §§35, 42, 81.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, pp. 25–32.

<sup>30</sup> Above pp. 109–111, §8.

<sup>31</sup> §§11, 12, 13, 24, 36.

impossible to attribute sonship to God in either a literal or figurative sense (§36). These arguments, all of which concern the doctrine of the Trinity and not the Incarnation, correspond to many that appear in surviving works from the third/ninth century, though with the exception of the first, which is used by the Baghdad Mu'tazilī Abū Ja'far al-Iskāfī (d. 239/854),<sup>32</sup> it is not possible to connect any one of them with particular authors from the earlier period. The very compressed form in which they appear here suggests that either 'Abd al-Jabbār had received them in a work where they had already been summarised in this manner, or he knew them as standard arguments that were passed down as part of Mu'tazilī lore.

A last identifiable Muslim source, though not one that is named, is the mid-third/ninth century free-thinking monotheist Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq, who is also employed by al-Bāqillānī. 'Abd al-Jabbār alludes to arguments from his major anti-Christian polemic, the *Radd 'alā al-thalāth firaq min al-Naṣārā*, in numerous places throughout the refutation, sometimes so closely that he could be actually quoting from the earlier scholar.<sup>33</sup> For example, the paragraph that summarises the beliefs about the Trinity on which Christians agree (§3) is too close to the same section in Abū 'Īsā's descriptive introduction (§§3–7)<sup>34</sup> to be independent. There are also close verbal parallels in subsequent paragraphs of 'Abd al-Jabbār's introduction that show Abū 'Īsā's work must be the basis of what is given here. In fact, all the main points of Abū 'Īsā's introduction appear somewhere in 'Abd al-Jabbār's longer and differently arranged introduction.

Arguments that recall Abū 'Īsā's appear mainly in §§21–31 of the *Mughnī*, where there are further similarities so close that direct quotation is possible. In the section against the Incarnation there are fewer direct coincidences, although 'Abd al-Jabbār clearly knows many of Abū 'Īsā's points, and is particularly aware of the metaphorical explanations of the Incarnation which the earlier scholar lists,<sup>35</sup> because he argues against most of them, and indeed takes some as main doctrines to be countered.

These correspondences show that there is an undeniable relationship between the *Mughnī* and Abū 'Īsā's *Radd*, though, like al-Bāqillānī, 'Abd

<sup>32</sup> See n. 34 to the translation below.

<sup>33</sup> For parallels, see Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 47–50; Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 80–81.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 66–69.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70–71, §11.

al-Jabbār is judicious in his use of the earlier work, taking points of information he finds useful and arguments he presumably finds cogent, but omitting much else. This suggests that he either combed through the *Radd* and made selections, or found them in an intermediary work where they were already excerpted, or possibly had access to whatever source or sources Abū ʿĪsā himself used. This latter alternative is unlikely, because it presupposes that the arguments that are verbally identical in the two scholars, and are expressed in language that is typical of Abū ʿĪsā’s style, appeared in exactly this form in this prior source. A less unlikely possibility is an intermediary work, either one of the other versions in which Abū ʿĪsā published his *Radd*,<sup>36</sup> or a work by a later author in which it is summarised.

Two other sources are also discernible behind the *Mughnī* refutation. One is the brief *maymar* of Theodore Abū Qurra which ‘Abd al-Jabbār ridicules in §76. In this, the Melkite bishop argues that if God is really divine he must eternally be superior over a subordinate being, requiring an eternal subordinate, who must be of the same nature as God, and who could thus only be a son. Here, ‘Abd al-Jabbār sums up Theodore’s apologetic argument in one of his extant *mayāmir* with some accuracy,<sup>37</sup> though the fact that ‘Abd al-Jabbār appears to know only this short work and does not know Theodore’s full name or designation, calling him rather generally ‘Qurra, the Melkite, their head’, suggests he had access to it through an intermediary source.<sup>38</sup>

The other source or sources are the Christian voices that debate with ‘Abd al-Jabbār about the person of Jesus Christ. They appear from nowhere, and it is difficult to decide finally whether they are actual Christians or convenient mouthpieces that enable ‘Abd al-Jabbār to elaborate his arguments, though the balance of probability must be tipped towards the former.

The first voice is heard in response to ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s point that if the act of Uniting between the human and divine in Christ is understood as a mixing of the two natures, the divine nature would have to be adjacent to all the atoms in Jesus’ body, which is impossible for God. The rejoinder comes that this explanation may be accepted by analogy

<sup>36</sup> See Thomas, *Incarnation*, p. 34, work nos. 13, 14 and 15.

<sup>37</sup> C. Bacha, *Les oeuvres arabes de Theodore Aboucara, évêque d’Haran*, Beirut, 1904, pp. 91–104; trans. J. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, Provo UT, 2005, pp. 140–149.

<sup>38</sup> A possible candidate is the Baghdad Muʿtazilī Abū Mūsā ʿĪsā b. Subayḥ al-Murdār’s (d. 226/841) lost *K. ‘alā Abī Qurra al-Naṣṣānī fī al-radd ‘alā al-Naṣārā*, cited in Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 207.6.

with the Muslim belief that God is everywhere (§51). Then in the ensuing discussion the voice makes the point that Jesus' miraculous actions prove that he was united with the divine nature.

There is no real reason why 'Abd al-Jabbār should invent Christian spokesmen for these arguments, because they are commonplace enough for him to have introduced them without an attribution. Since the metaphor of the mixing of the two natures was known among Nestorians,<sup>39</sup> who would constitute the main denomination with whom 'Abd al-Jabbār would be in contact in Rayy where he lived, there is every possibility that he heard this comparison between Christian claims about the Incarnation and Muslim beliefs about the omnipresence of God from a live source.

Rather more pressingly, a second voice makes the point a little later that the concept of the divine nature inhering in the human nature is parallel to the suggestion of Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī that the Qur'ān inheres in a writing tablet or the tongue (§54). This is followed by a series of attempts to compare this interpretation of the Christian doctrine with Islamic teachings about the ways in which elements of the contingent world behave, or the way in which God subsists (§§55–65), many of them showing great intimacy with the details of *kalām* physical theories, Muslim beliefs about God, and the teachings of Abū 'Alī in particular (he is adduced again in §64). The freshness of their points and the awkwardness of their arguments for 'Abd al-Jabbār convey a verisimilitude that clearly points to Christian *mutakallimūn* who knew the developments in current Muslim discourse and were able to employ them with some ease in defence and explanation of their own doctrines.

There are further allusions to other voices later in the refutation of the Incarnation, though few of these have the same quality of directness or engage in the same way with the points being made by 'Abd al-Jabbār.<sup>40</sup> So maybe this series of anonymous Christian spokesmen represent a live debate about the particular interpretation of the Incarnation as mingling that 'Abd al-Jabbār had witnessed or participated in, or a report of such a debate he had been given.

The presence of these possibly Nestorian voices in the argument and the character of their interventions underline the overall approach adopted in the *Mughnī* refutation. For these Christians see it as advis-

<sup>39</sup> See A. Grillmeier, *Le Christ dans la tradition chrétienne. De l'âge apostolique à Chalcedoine (451)*, Paris, 1973, pp. 517–518.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. §§78, 81 and 82.



able and probably necessary to adopt methods that derive from Muslim theology and even refer explicitly to its leading authorities. Like the interlocutors who take issue with al-Bāqillānī over the comparison of divine attributes in his Godhead and the hypostases in theirs, these seem aware that they are on the defensive both in terms of belief and of their articulation of its doctrinal formulation. There is a clear acknowledgement that Islamic thinking is dominant and a preparedness to comply with it. In the use of ideas from Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī there may even be indications that, like ‘Ammār al-Baṣṣī many years before, they were ready to manipulate it for their own purposes, not least to put the Muslim on the spot by trying to make him disagree with a master from his own school.

Of course, ‘Abd al-Jabbār shows no sign of being under any noticeable pressure. For him his own arguments are final, and his demonstration that this elaborate lapse from the purity of strict monotheism is complete. Christian attempts to explain their doctrines are valueless and their defences incoherent. Therefore, he has made his case, and the alternatives to his own form of setting out Islamic teachings provide vivid demonstrations that the only rationally acceptable beliefs are those he himself supports. Christianity has no value other than to show this.

This edition of the refutation of Christianity in the *Mughnī* is based upon the two known MSS of this part of the work, together with reference to the published edition,<sup>41</sup> where they are called م and خ.<sup>42</sup> MS م is dated 606/1210, about two hundred years after ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s original composition. MS خ is not dated, but is from about the same time. They are evidently very close and preserve the same occasional mistakes, including the obvious بن الابن ابن in place of بن لابن ابن on p. 86 of the edition (§11 n. 1 in the text below). But there are signs that خ is a more careful version than م, for where م repeats passages through dittography خ usually does not, and where م gives wrong headings to three of the sections of the refutation of the Incarnation, خ omits these headings completely but resumes them where م is once more correct.<sup>43</sup> This relationship suggests that either خ is a careful copy of

<sup>41</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Al-mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-al-‘adl*, vol. V, ed. M.M. al-Khudayrī, Cairo, 1958.

<sup>42</sup> See Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, p. 27, n. 115.

<sup>43</sup> See nn. 49, 50 and 54 to the text below.

م, or that they are independent copies of an earlier version, which خ has followed with greater regard to sense than م, and omitted its most glaring mistakes. In view of the omissions in م, such as those referred to in notes 6, 14 and 21 to the Arabic text, the latter alternative is more likely.

In the textual notes below the MSS are referred to as م and خ, and the edition as ط (= *ṭabʿa*).

‘Abd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī

*Al-Kalām ‘alā al-Naṣārā*

*min*

*Al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawḥīd wa-al-‘Adl*

## الكلام على النصارى

### فصل: في ذكر جهل من أقاويلهم

1. ذكر شيخنا أبو علي، رحمه الله، أن من مذهب جميع النصارى إلا نفر منهم<sup>1</sup> يسير أن الله تعالى خالق الأشياء<sup>2</sup> والخالق حي متكلّم؛ وحياته هي الروح التي يسمونها روح القدس، وكلامه هو علم. ومنهم من يقول في الحياة إنها قدرة.

وزعموا أن الله وكلمته وقدرته قدماء، وأنّ الكلمة هي الابن وهي عندهم المسيح الذي ظهر في الجسد الذي كان في الأرض. ويختلفون في الذي يستحقّ اسم المسيح، فمنهم من يقول إنّ الكلمة والجسم إذ اتّحد بعضهما ببعض، ومنهم من يزعم أنّ الكلمة دون الجسد، ومنهم من يزعم أنّ الجسد المحدث وأنّ الكلمة صارت جسداً محدثاً لما صارت في بطن مريم وظهرت للناس. ويزعمون جميعاً أنّ الكلمة هي الابن وأنّ الذي له الروح والكلمة هو الأب.<sup>3</sup> ويزعمون أنّ هذه الثلاثة هي إله واحد وخالق واحد، وأنّها من جوهر واحد. وهذا جملة ما حكاها.

---

<sup>1</sup>خ || م: بفرق بينهم. <sup>2</sup>خ || م: خلق. <sup>3</sup>ط: هو الابن.

## *The Argument against the Christians*

### *Chapter: an account of all their teachings*<sup>1</sup>

1. Our master Abū ‘Alī,<sup>2</sup> may God have mercy on him, reported that among the beliefs of all the Christians, except for a small group of them, is that God almighty is the Creator of things, and the Creator is living and speaking. His Life is the Spirit, which they call the Holy Spirit, and his Word is Knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Some of them say that Life is Power.<sup>4</sup>

They claim that God and his Word and his Power are eternal, and that the Word is the Son and, according to them, is Christ, who appeared in the body which was on earth. And they differ over who is entitled to the name Christ. Some say that it was the Word and the physical body when one of them united with the other. Others claim that it was the Word apart from the body. And others claim that it was the temporal body, and that the Word became a temporal body when it entered Mary’s womb and appeared to humankind.<sup>5</sup>

They all claim that the Word is the Son, and that the One to whom the Word and the Spirit belong is the Father.<sup>6</sup> And they claim that these three are one God and one Creator, and that they are of one substance.

This is the whole of what he reported.

---

<sup>1</sup> The introduction, §§ 1–9, is translated and annotated by G. Monnot, ‘Les doctrines des Chrétiens dans le *Moghni* de ‘Abd al-Jabbār’, *MIDEO* 16, 1983, pp. 9–30; repr. *Islam et Religions*, pp. 239–259. References below are to the latter.

<sup>2</sup> This is Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī, (d. 303/915–916), the leader of the Baṣra Mu’tazilīs in the early fourth/tenth century, whom ‘Abd al-Jabbār quotes repeatedly in this refutation. On the work from which these extracts came, see Thomas, ‘Mu’tazilī Response’.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. al-Nāshī’ al-Akbar, above, pp. 72–73, §35. Like his Baghdad contemporary, Abū ‘Alī appears to accept without comment the model of the Trinity based on the logic of divine attributes, according to which God’s characteristics of being living and knowing derive from attributes of his essence.

<sup>4</sup> This variant may be a response to Muslim polemical jibes that the attribute of power was as essential to the constituency of the Godhead as either of the other two.

<sup>5</sup> It is just possible to detect in these brief formulas the Christologies of the Melkites, Diophysites/Nestorians and Miaphysites/Jacobites.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Nāshī’, above pp. 36–39, § 1, is also aware of this generative model as the main explanation of the relationship between the Persons.

2. واعلم أنّ الذي يجب أن يُحكى من مذاهب النصارى مواضع، ويُفصل بين ما اتَّفَقوا عليه وما اختلفوا فيه، وبين ما يمكن تحصيله من مذاهبهم المتَّفَق عليه والمختلف فيه، لأنّ ضبط جميع مذاهبهم يصعب لكون مقالاتهم مبنية على أصول غير معقولة وعبارات لا تتحصّل معانيها. والفرق المشهورة في النصارى هي اليعقوبيّة، أصحاب يعقوب، والنسطوريّة، أصحاب نسطوريوس، وربّما قيل أصحاب نسطور، والملكيّة، أهل دين الملك. ولهم بعد ذلك فرق أقدم منهم أو أحدث، قد حكى عنهم مذاهب مخالفة لما عليه هذه الفرق الثلاثة.

3. ونحن نذكر من أقوالهم ما يجب ذكره والذي اتَّفقت الفرق الثلاثة عليه: إنّ الخالق الإله جوهر واحد ثلاثة أقانيم، وإنّ أحد هذه الأقانيم أب والآخر ابن والثالث روح القدس، وإنّ الابن هو الكلمة والروح هي الحياة والأب هو القديم الحي المتكلّم؛ وإنّ هذه الأقانيم الثلاثة متَّفقة في الجوهرية مختلفة في الأقنومية؛ وإنّ الابن لم يزل مولوداً من الأب، والأب والدّاً للابن، ولم تزل الروح فائضة من الأب والابن؛ وليس كون الابن ابناً للأب على جهة

2. Know that what must be related from the beliefs of the Christians are points which can be divided into what they agree on and what they differ over, and between what is possible to discover from their beliefs as agreed on and as differed over. For to grasp the whole of their beliefs is difficult because of their doctrines being established on irrational principles and forms of explanation whose meaning cannot be discovered.

The best-known sects among the Christians are the Jacobites, the followers of Jacob, the Nestorians, the followers of Nestorius, sometimes called followers of Nestor, and the Melkites,<sup>7</sup> the people of the emperor's faith. In addition to this, they have older or more recent sects, from which are reported beliefs different from what these three sects hold.<sup>8</sup>

3. We shall report what should be reported of their teachings, and what the three sects agree upon: the Creator is one substance and three hypostases;<sup>9</sup> one of these hypostases is Father, the second Son, and the third Holy Spirit; the Son is the Word, the Spirit is the Life and the Father is the eternal living, speaking One; these three hypostases conform in substantiality and differ in hypostaticity; the Son is eternally begotten from the Father, the Father eternally begets the Son, and the Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son;<sup>10</sup> the Son is not Son of the Father in the sense of being offspring, but like the generating of a word from reason, the heat of a fire from the fire, and the radiance

<sup>7</sup> Both *Malkiyya* and *Malkāniyya* appear in this account. They presumably reflect the forms used in ‘Abd al-Jabbār's different sources.

<sup>8</sup> This might be a reference to one of ‘Abd al-Jabbār's sources, the *Radd* of Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq, where lesser known Christian sects are mentioned; Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 70–71, §12. ‘Abd al-Jabbār's decision not to describe their distinctive beliefs or to argue against them (though he does refer to the Maronites towards the end of this introduction, §9, and towards the end of his arguments against the doctrine of Uniting, §82, and names the Julianists in §78) is indicative of his general concern only for the major outlines of the doctrines he is examining.

<sup>9</sup> The terms *jawhar* and *uqnūm* are evidently familiar enough not to require explanation.

<sup>10</sup> This reference to the *filioque*, the procession of the Spirit jointly from the other two Persons, a doctrine that originated in the west and was vehemently opposed in the east, is surprising in a composition that presumably derived its information about Christianity from eastern sources. On its appearance here, cf. S.K. Samir, ‘Une allusion au Filioque dans la “Réfutation des chrétiens” de ‘Abd al-Ġabbār (m. 1025)’, in *Studi albanologici, balcanici, bizantini e orientali in onore di Giuseppe Valentini*, sj, Florence, 1986, pp. 361–367.

النسل لكن كتولّد الكلمة من العقل وحرّ النار من النار وضياء الشمس من الشمس.

واتّفقوا أنّ الابن اتّحد بالشخص الذي يسمونه المسيح وأن ذلك الشخص ظهر للناس وصُلب وقُتل.

4. واختلفوا في جملة ما حكيناه ضرورياً من الاختلاف. فمنهم من قال: إنّ الأقانيم هي الجوهر والجوهر هو الأقانيم. وهذا قول اليعقوبية والنسطورية، وفي الناس من يحكيه عن الملكانية أيضاً. ومنهم من حكى عن الملكانية أنّ القديم جوهر واحد ذو ثلاثة أقانيم، وأنّ الأقانيم هي الجوهر والجوهر غير الأقانيم وليس برابع لها قي العدد. ويقولون في الأقانيم إنّها جوهر بسيط ويمتنعون من كونه جوهرًا مركّبًا.

واختلفوا في الأقانيم، فقال بعضهم: إنّ الأقانيم هي الخواص؛ وقال بعضهم: أشخاص؛ وقال بعضهم: وجوه وصفات. فكأنّهم يقولون: جوهر واحد ثلاثة خواص وثلاثة أشخاص. واختلفوا فقال بعضهم في الأقانيم: مختلفة في الأقساميّة متّفقة في الجوهرية. وقال بعضهم: لا نقول "مختلفة" لكنّا نقول إنّها أقانيم ثلاثة متّفقة في أنّها جوهر واحد فقط. واختلفوا فزعم بعضهم أنّ كلّ واحد من الأقانيم حيّ ناطق إله. وهذا قول بعض النسطورية، وقال الباقون: ليس كلّ واحد منها عند الانفراد في الذكر إلهًا ولا حيًّا ولا ناطقًا.

واختلفوا فقال بعضهم: إنّ الكلمة هي العلم؛ وقال بعضهم: إنّ المراد بالكلمة العلم، وإنّا سُمي ذلك لأنّه يظهر بالنطق. ومن قول بعضهم: إنّ الكلمة والنطق ليسا العلم. وحكى عن بعضهم أنّه قال في الروح إنّها قدرة.



of the sun from the sun;<sup>11</sup> they agree that the Son united with the individual whom they call Christ, and that this individual appeared to people, was crucified and killed.

4. They disagree in various ways about everything we have related. Among them are those who say: the hypostases are the substance, and the substance is the hypostases. This is the teaching of the Jacobites and Nestorians, and among people are those who relate it from the Melkites as well. Among them are those who relate from the Melkites that the eternal One is one substance which possesses three hypostases, and that the hypostases are the substance and the substance is other than the hypostases, though is not numerically a fourth to them.<sup>12</sup> About the hypostases they say that they are simple substance, and they do not grant that it is a composite substance.

They disagree over the hypostases. Some of them say: The hypostases are particular properties; some of them say: Individuals; and some of them say: Aspects and attributes.<sup>13</sup> It is as though they say: One substance, three particular properties and three individuals.

They disagree, and some of them say that the hypostases are different in hypostaticity and are uniform in substantiality;<sup>14</sup> others of them say: We do not say ‘different’, but we say that they are three hypostases which are uniform in that they are one substance, and no more. They disagree, and some of them claim that each one of the hypostases is living, speaking, divine: this is the teaching of some of the Nestorians. The rest say: When referred to alone they are not singly divine, living or speaking.

They disagree, and some of them say: The Word is knowledge; others say: The sense of ‘Word’ is knowledge, and it is only called this because it becomes manifest through speech. The teaching of some of them is that the Word and Speech are not knowledge, and it is related from one of them that he said about the Spirit that it is power.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 68–69, §7. These analogies for the Trinity would have been commonplace in Christian-Muslim polemic at this time.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 66–67, §1–2, though Abū ʿĪsā does not mention the Melkites who agree with the other two groups.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 68–69, §8.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 66–67, §5.

<sup>15</sup> This agrees with what Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī says, §1 above.

واختلفوا فحكى بعضهم عنهم أنهم قالوا في الأقانيم إنها متغايرة وإن علمه وحياته هما غيره. ومنهم من حكى عنهم إن الأقانيم هي الجوهر وليست غيره وإن كان من حيث كان أقانيم يختص بها لا يختص به من حيث كان جوهرًا. ومثله بالفحمة إذا صارت جمرة وإن لم تخرج عما هي عليه، فقد اكتسبت صفة لم تكن عليها حيث كانت فحمة.

5. واختلفوا في المسيح والاتحاد، فزعمت النسطورية أن المسيح إله وإنسان ماسح وممسوح اتحدا فصارا مسيحًا واحدًا، ومعنى "اتحدا" أنه صار من اثنين واحد. والمسيح عندهم على الحقيقة جوهران أقنومان جوهر قديم لم يزل وهو الكلمة التي هي أحد أقانيم الإله، وجوهر محدث كان بعد أن لم يكن وهو يشوع المولود من مريم. وربما جعلوا بدل "اتحد" "تجسد"، وربما قالوا "تأسس" و"تركب". وذهبت الملكانية إلى أن المسيح جوهران أحدهما قديم والآخر محدث.

وزعم أكثر اليعقوبية أن المسيح جوهر واحد إلا أنه من جوهرين أحدهما جوهر الإله القديم والآخر جوهر الإنسان اتحدا فصارا جوهرًا واحدًا أقنومًا واحدًا، وربما قال بعضهم "طبيعة واحدة".

6. واختلفوا، بعد اتفاقهم على أن الاتحاد أمر حادث صار المسيح به مسيحًا، في ذلك الأمر الحادث ما هو وعلى أي وجه كان. فقال بعضهم: إن الكلمة اتحدت بذلك الإنسان على طريق الامتزاج؛ وقال بعضهم: اتخذته هيكلًا ومحلاً؛ وقال بعضهم: حلّت فيه فدبرت به وعلى يديه؛<sup>1</sup> وقال بعضهم: ليس

<sup>1</sup> ط: فدثرت به وعلى بدنه.

They disagree, and one of them has related from them that they say the hypostases are different from one another, and that his Knowledge and Life are other than him. Among them is one who has related from them that the hypostases are the substance and are not other than it, though by virtue of being hypostases they are particularised in a way it is not by virtue of it being substance. They liken it to a piece of coal when it becomes an ember: it does not cease to be what it is, but it acquires an attribute which it did not have by virtue of being a piece of coal.<sup>16</sup>

5. They disagree about Christ and the Uniting. For the Nestorians claim that Christ was divine and human, Anointer and anointed, who united together and became one Christ.<sup>17</sup> The meaning of ‘they united together’ is that one came from two. And in their view Christ was in reality two substances and two hypostases, an eternal substance which is timeless, the Word which is one of the hypostases of the Divinity, and a temporal hypostasis which was after it was not, Jesus who was born of Mary. Sometimes they substitute ‘became a body’ for ‘united’, and sometimes they say ‘became human’ and ‘became composite’.<sup>18</sup> The Melkites believe that Christ was two substances, one eternal and the other temporal.

The majority of the Jacobites claim that Christ was one substance, but was from two substances, one of them the substance of the eternal Divinity and the other the substance of the human.<sup>19</sup> They united and became one substance and one hypostasis. Sometimes some of them say ‘one nature’.

6. After their agreement that the Uniting was something that happened through which Christ became Christ, they disagree about what this thing that happened was and in what manner it occurred. For some of them say: The Word united with the human in the form of mixing. Others say: It took him as a temple and location. Others say: It inhered within him and exercised control by him and through him. Some say:

---

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 74–75, §14, where, however, it is employed for the Incarnation. It is certainly pre-Islamic, and is also known from Christians living under Muslim rule, but for the Incarnation (cf. Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 296–297, n. 16).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 72–73, §14.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 68–69, §10.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 70–71, §12.

على شيء من ذلك لكن على حسب ما تظهر صورة الإنسان في المرأة المجلوة إذا نظر فيها؛ وقال بعضهم: على حسب ظهور نقش الخاتم في الطينة المطبوعة من غير انتقال النقش عن<sup>1</sup> الخاتم وحلوله في الطينة. هذه مذاهب من لم يجعل الكلمة والجسد شيئاً واحداً، فأما اليعقوبية فإنها قالت: إنّ الجوهرين صاراً جوهرًا واحدًا.

7. وحكى عن بعضهم في الاتحاد أنّه بمعنى المشيئة لا أن الذاتين اتّحدا في الحقيقة. واختلفوا في ذلك من وجه آخر: فذهب بعضهم إلى أنّ الجوهر العامّ اتّحد بالإنسان الكلّي، وقال بعضهم: اتّحد بإنسان شخصي<sup>2</sup>. ثمّ اختلفوا فيه على هذين القولين، فمنهم من قال: اتّحد بالإنسان الكلّي، ومنهم من قال بالإنسان الشخصي. وربّما قالوا إنّ الابن اتّحد بالإنسان الكلّي ليخلص الكلّ، وقال بعضهم: اتّحد بالإنسان الجزئي ليخلص الجزء. واختلفوا في المسيح ما هو بحسب ما ذكرنا من اختلافهم في الاتحاد. فمن قال في الاتحاد إنّ الجوهرين صاراً جوهرًا واحدًا والمحدث صار قديمًا قال في المسيح إنّهُ قديم؛ ومن قال في معنى الاتحاد بالوجه الآخر قال في المسيح إنّهُ لاهوت وناسوت.

<sup>1</sup>ط: على. <sup>2</sup>خ || م: وقال بعضهم: الذي اتّحد بالإنسان الجزئي ليخلص الجزء.

It was none of this, but according to how the form of a person appears in a polished mirror when he looks in it. Others say: According to the appearance of the engraving of a seal in pressed clay, without the engraving being transferred from the seal or inhering in the clay.<sup>20</sup>

These beliefs do not make the Word and the body one thing. But the Jacobites for their part say: The two substances became one substance.

7. It has been related from some of them about the Uniting that it had the significance of volition, not that the two essences united in reality.<sup>21</sup> And they disagree on this in another respect, in that some of them believe that the general substance united with the universal human, and some of them say it united with the individual human. Then they disagree over it according to these two teachings. For among them are those who say: It united with the universal human. And among them are those who say: With the individual human. Sometimes they say: The Son united with the universal human in order to save the whole. And some say: He united with the individual human in order to save the individual.<sup>22</sup>

They disagree about what Christ was, according to what we have mentioned about their disagreement over the Uniting. For those who say about the Uniting, The two substances became one substance and the temporal became eternal, say that Christ is eternal. And those who talk about the meaning of the uniting in another manner say that Christ was a divine nature and a human nature.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> This reproduces the main elements of the list given by Abū ʿĪsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 70–71, §11.

<sup>21</sup> ʿAbd al-Jabbār makes a great deal of this in his arguments against the Incarnation, though its authors are difficult to identify. Since it suggests that the form of uniting was of the conformity of wills between the otherwise separate divine Word and human Jesus, it may be a Muslim interpretation of a Nestorian explanation of the Incarnation, such as that given by Abū ʿĪsā in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 72–73, §14, where they say that the divine and human natures shared one volition.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 68–69, §10, where the proponents of the act of Uniting between the divine nature (not universal substance) and universal human in Christ are identified as Melkites.

<sup>23</sup> If ʿAbd al-Jabbār is relying largely upon Abū ʿĪsā in this description, as seems to be the case, at this point he appears to be attempting to impose some abstract order on what he has reported by categorising the views he has set out. This takes him even further away from the actual doctrines he is reporting than the schematic summaries he is copying from his Muslim predecessor.

8. واختلقوا في الصلب والقتل بعد اتّفاقهم على أنّ المسيح صُلب وقُتل. فزعمت النسطورية أنّ الصلب وقع على المسيح من جهة ناسوته لا من جهة لاهوته؛ وزعم أكثر الملكانية أنّ الصلب وقع على المسيح بكماله، والمسيح هو اللاهوت والناسوت؛ وزعم أكثر اليعقوبية أنّ الصلب والقتل وقعا في الجوهر الواحد الكائن من الجوهرين اللذين هما الإله والإنسان، وهو المسيح على الحقيقة وهو الإله، وبه حلّت الآلام، حتى زعمت الملكانية واليعقوبية أنّ الذي ولدته مريم هو الإله في الحقيقة. ومنهم من قال إنّ المسيح جوهر واحد قديم من جهة محدث من جهة، مولود من جهة غير مولود من جهة، مصلوب مقتول من جهة غير مقتول مصلوب من جهة؛ ومنهم من قال إنّ القتل والصلب والموت والألم كان على الخيلولة لا على اليقين، وأنّ الجنس المتّحد به لطيف لا تحلّه الآلام. وهذا محكى عن بعض اليعقوبية

9. واتّفقوا أنّ المسيح يُعبد ويستحقّ ذلك، واختلفوا في أنّه بكماله معبود أو يُعبد من جهة لاهوته على حسب ما حكيانه من اختلافهم في الاتّحاد وفي المسيح ما هو. وفي أصناف النصارى طبقة يُقال لها المارونية<sup>1</sup> قالت في المسيح إنّّه جوهران أقنوم واحد بمعنى أنّه مشيئة واحدة وأنّ الإله صُلب في الحقيقة من أجلنا ليخلّصنا. وحكى عنهم بعض الناس أن من قولهم إنّ الكلمة كانت تداخل المسيح في أوقات فعله للآيات وتفارقه في سائر

<sup>1</sup>خ: الهارونية؛ م: الهادونية.

8. After their agreement that Christ was crucified and killed, they disagree over the crucifixion and killing. For the Nestorians claim that the crucifixion affected Christ with respect to his human nature not with respect to his divine nature. And the majority of the Melkites claim that the crucifixion affected Christ in his entirety, Christ being the divine nature and human nature. And the majority of the Jacobites claim that the crucifixion and killing affected the one substance that existed from the two substances which were divine and human; he was Christ in reality and he was the Divinity, and the sufferings were inflicted upon him.<sup>24</sup> In fact, the Melkites and Jacobites say that the one who was born of Mary was the Divinity in truth.

Among them are those who say that Christ was one substance, eternal in one aspect temporal in another, born in one aspect not born in another, crucified and killed in one aspect not killed or crucified in another. And among them are those who say that the killing, the crucifixion, the death and the suffering were imaginary not actual, and that the kind that was united with was subtle, which sufferings could not touch. This is related from some of the Jacobites.<sup>25</sup>

9. They agree that Christ is to be worshipped and deserves this. And they disagree as to whether he should be worshipped in his entirety or worshipped in the aspect of his divine nature, according to what we have related about their disagreement over the Uniting and who Christ was. Among the groups of Christians is a kind called the Maronites,<sup>26</sup> who say that Christ was two substances and one hypostasis in the sense that he was one volition, and that the Divinity was crucified for our sakes in order to save us. Some people relate from them that part of their teaching is that the Word would come over Christ at the times he performed miracles and would withdraw from him during other

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Abū ‘Īsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 74–77, §15.

<sup>25</sup> Monnot, ‘Doctrines des Chrétiens’, p. 258 n. 66, refers to al-Shahrastānī, *Milāl*, who identifies this sub-group as Julianists, followers of Julian of Halicarnassus (Abū ‘Īsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 70–71, mentions them in passing at the beginning of the *Radd*, and at the end, in Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 272–273 and 276–277, he says that he intends to refute them together with other minor Christian sects). If they are named in ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s source at this point (he himself names them in §78), his omission shows that his main interest is the actual propositions contained in the doctrines rather than their historical origins.

<sup>26</sup> The identification of this one minor Christian group presumably results from the sources being used by ‘Abd al-Jabbār.

الأفعال. ومن متقدميهم مَنْ زعم أنَّ الكلمة عند الاتحاد مرّت في بطن مريم كما يمرّ السهم في الهواء والماء في الميزاب.

وحكى عن بعض مَنْ تقدّم منهم أنَّ الله واحد وسماه أباً، وقال في المسيح إنّه كلمة الله وابنه على طريق الاصطفاء، وهو مخلوق خلّق قبل خلق العالم وجعل خالقاً للأشياء<sup>1</sup> وسماه لذلك إلهاً. قال: وزعم أنَّ المسيح اتّحد بإنسان من مريم وأنه صُلب. وزعم أنَّ الله روحاً مخلوقة أكرم من سائر الأرواح، وأنها واسطة بين الأب والابن تؤدّي<sup>2</sup> إليه الوحي من الأب. وزعم أنَّ المسيح ابتدأ جوهرًا لطيفاً روحانيًا خالصًا غير مركّب ولا ممزوج بشيء من الطبائع الأربع، وأنه إنّما تدرّج الطبائع عند اتّحاده بالجسم المأخوذ من مريم المجتمعة فيه الطبائع الأربع.

وفيهم مَنْ زعم في المسيح أنّه ابتدأ من مريم ابتداءً، وأنه نبي صالح شرّفه الله وكرّمه لطاعته وسماه ابنًا على طريق التبنّي لا على طريق الولادة. وما قدمناه من المذاهب عنهم هي المشهورة من مذاهبهم دون ما ذكرناه آخرًا.

### فصل: في ذكر إبطال مذهبهم في التثليث على الوجه الذي حكيناه عنهم

10. اعلم أنا قدمنا من الدلالة على أنَّ القديم واحد لا ثانى له في الحقيقة ما يدل على إبطال مذهبهم إذا حصل من مذهبهم على وجه يكون خلافًا في المعنى، لأنّهم إن قالوا إنّ الإله ثلاثة أقانيم ولم يرجعوا بذلك إلى ثلاث ذوات مخصوصة<sup>3</sup> بصفات لم يحصل خلافهم إلّا في العبارة إذا رجعوا

<sup>1</sup> 73 Monnot, 'Doctrines des Chrétiens', p. 59, n. 73 | خ: خلقا لأشياء؛ م: خلقه للأشياء؛ ط: خلق الأشياء [به]. <sup>2</sup> ط: يؤدى. <sup>3</sup> خ: مختصة.



actions. Among their earlier adherents were those who claimed that at the Uniting the Word passed through Mary’s womb as an arrow passes through the air and water through a tube.<sup>27</sup>

It is related from one of their early adherents that God is one, and he named him ‘Father’. About Christ, he said that he was the Word of God and his Son in the sense of election; he was a creature, created before the creation of the world, and was made creator of things. For this reason he called him divine. He said: He claimed that Christ united with the human from Mary and that he was crucified. He claimed that God has a created Spirit higher ranking than the other spirits, and that it is intermediary between the Father and the Son, conveying to him the revelation from the Father. He claimed that Christ was initially a subtle, spiritual, pure substance, uncomposite and not mixed with any of the four elements; and that he only put on the elements when he united with the physical body taken from Mary who was the meeting point of the four elements in him.<sup>28</sup>

Among them are those who claim that Christ initially began from Mary, and was a devout prophet whom God honoured and gave high rank because of his obedience, and called him Son in the sense of adoption not in the sense of begetting.<sup>29</sup>

The beliefs we have spoken about from them earlier are the best known of their beliefs, not including what we have just mentioned.

*Chapter: the account of disproving their belief in the  
Trinity according to the form we have related from them*

10. Know that the proof we have already given that the eternal One is one and has no second in reality proves the falseness of their belief, if their belief issues in any form that is significantly different.<sup>30</sup> For if they say that the Divinity is three hypostases, and do not derive this from three essences particularised by attributes, their difference is only

<sup>27</sup> Cf. al-Nāshī, above pp. 54–55, §22.

<sup>28</sup> This must be Arius, whose teachings about the subordination of the Son to the Father initiated one of the main schisms in the early church and led to the Council of Nicea in 325. They are also known to al-Nāshī, al-Akbar, above pp. 58–59, §26.

<sup>29</sup> This is probably a reference to the anonymous group of Christians whom al-Jāhīz in the early third/ninth century records comparing Jesus as adopted Son of God with Abraham as friend of God for polemical purposes. ‘Abd al-Jabbār summarises Abū ‘Alī, al-Jāhīz and others’ responses to them later in the refutation, pp. 284–293 below, §§33–36.

<sup>30</sup> This will have been set out in one of the lost earlier parts of the *Mughnī*.

بالصفات إلى كونه تعالى عالماً حياً. ومتى أرادوا بذلك أنه ثلاث ذوات على ما تذهب إليه الكلائية في أنه تعالى عالم بعلم وحى بحياة، فالدلالة التي دلّت على أن القديم تعالى واحد يبطل هذا القول.

وما قدمناه من أن ما شارك القديم في كونه قديماً يستحيل أن يختص لذاته بما يفارق به الآخر يبطل قولهم أيضاً، لأنّ هذه الأقانيم إذا كانت قديمة، فيجب أن لا يصحّ أن يختص الأب بما يستحيل على الابن والروح ولا يصحّ اختصاصهما بما يستحيل عليه ولا اختصاص كل واحد منهما بما يستحيل على الآخر. وهذا يوجب كون الابن أباً وكون الأب ابناً وكون الأب روحاً والروح أباً.

II. وعلى هذه الطريقة ألزمهم شيوخنا القول بأنّ لابن<sup>1</sup> ابن، وذلك أن الابن إذا شارك الأب في كونه قديماً ووجب كونه مثلاً له في ذاته، فيجب إن كان

---

<sup>1</sup>ط: الابن.

in expression if they derive the attributes from the exalted One being knowing and living. If they mean by this teaching that he is three essences, in the way the *Kullābiyya*<sup>31</sup> believe that the exalted One is knowing by knowledge and living by life, the proof which proves that the almighty eternal One is one disproves this teaching.<sup>32</sup>

What we have already said about the fact that the eternal One has no partner in his being eternal, making it impossible that in his essence he should be particularised by what distinguishes him from another, disproves their teaching as well.<sup>33</sup> For if these hypostases are eternal, then it cannot be right for the Father to be particularised by what is impossible for the Son and Spirit, and it is not right for them to be particularised by what is impossible for him, or for either of them to be particularised by what is impossible for the other. And this necessitates the Son being Father, the Father being Son, the Father being Spirit and the Spirit being Father.

11. In this manner our masters<sup>34</sup> compelled them to accept the teaching that the Son has a son. This is, that if the Son shares with the Father in his being eternal and he is necessarily like him in his essence, then if

<sup>31</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār disparagingly refers to this group a number of times in this refutation. While he names them after the early third/ninth century thinker ‘Abdallāh Ibn Kullāb (d. c. 240/854), who insisted against the prevailing Mu‘tazilī views of his time that the divine attributes really existed as part of God’s essence (see al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, pp. 169–170), ‘Abd al-Jabbār presumably has in mind Ash‘arī contemporaries, who essentially held the same views.

<sup>32</sup> In this paragraph ‘Abd al-Jabbār succinctly sets out the differences between his own and his opponents’ positions, and divulges his true estimation of the Christian doctrine. According to agreed Mu‘tazilī understanding, God’s characteristics derived from his essence itself, so as to avoid any implications of multiple eternals, while according to the Kullābī/Ash‘arīs, these characteristics derived from really existent attributes that could be identified in addition to God’s essence. If the Christians argue that what they term hypostases do not correspond to realities in the Godhead they agree with the Mu‘tazilī view, but if they insist upon three realities then they agree with the other side and can be refuted by the same arguments that are used against them. It appears that in ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s mind there is no real difference between the hypostases in Trinitarian doctrine and the attributes in Muslim doctrine.

<sup>33</sup> Again, this proof will have been given in one of the lost earlier parts of the work.

<sup>34</sup> These could be ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s own teachers, though he is more probably referring to arguments he knows of from the earlier Mu‘tazilī tradition because this argument is reported in the name of the mid-third/ninth century Baghdad Mu‘tazilī Abū Ja‘far al-Iskāfī (d. 239/854) by Abū al-Qāsim al-Ka‘bī (d. 318/929), *Awā’il al-adilla*, in excerpts preserved by the Christian Ibn Zur‘a, *Maqāla fī al-tathlīth*; cf. P. Sbath, *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologétiques d’auteurs arabes chrétiens du IXe au XIVe siècle*, Cairo, 1929, p. 65.

الأب لا بدّ له من ابن هو العلم والكلمة أن يكون الابن بمنزلته في أن له ابناً هو العلم والكلمة ولا ابن الابن ابن إلى ما لا نهاية له. ومن يثبت استحالة حاجة الابن، لو كان هناك ابن، إلى ابن، وجبّ مثله في الأب. وكذلك يلزمهم في الروح أن يكون له روح لما له قالوا في الأب أن له روحاً ولروح الروح روحاً إلى ما لا نهاية له.

ويلزمهم أن يكون للابن روح وللروح ابن كما أن للأب ابناً وروحاً لمشاركتها له في القدم الموجب للتماثل. فلا يصحّ أن يثبتوا للأب مع قولهم بمشاركة<sup>1</sup> الابن له في القدم ما لأجله<sup>2</sup> احتاج إلى ابن دون الابن والروح ولا يمكنهم أن يقولوا إنّ كونه أباً وكون الابن ابناً له لا يرجع إلى ذاته لأنّه يرجع إلى علّة، لأنّهم<sup>3</sup> وإن رجعوا بذلك إلى علّة فلا بدّ من أن يقولوا إنّّه لما هو عليه في ذاته يصحّ كونه أباً عالمًا، وصحّ كون الابن الذي هو العلم والكلمة ابناً له وعلمًا وكلمة، فما شاركه في كونه قديمًا يجب أن تصحّ عليه هذه الصفة على الوجه الذي صحّت عليه، وفي ذلك إيجاب ما ألزمناهم فيها تقدم. وقد بينا ما يسقط هذا السؤال عند الكلام على الكلاسيّة في قولها إنّّه تعالى عالم، وإنّ العلم لا يجب كونه عالمًا، وإن اشتركا في القدم، من حيث استحقّ كونه عالمًا لمعنى لا لذاته. فما ذكرناه هناك يسقط هذا السؤال.

12. وعلى هذه الطريقة ألزمهم شيوخنا القول بأنّ كلّ واحد من الأفانيم إله لأنّه إذا كان الابن والروح مشاركين للأب في القدم، فما أوجب كونه إلهًا يوجب كونها إلهين، وكون كلّ واحد منهما إلهًا يبطل أصل مقالتهم، لأنّهم توصلوا إلى ذلك بأنّ القديم الفاعل، إذا استحال كونه حيًّا إلاّ بحياة، عالمًا

<sup>1</sup>خ || م، ط: مشاركة. <sup>2</sup>خ: القديم لأجله. <sup>3</sup>م: لأنّهم علّة فلا بدّ من أن.

the Father must have a Son who is Knowledge and Word, it must follow that the Son by his rank will have a son who is knowledge and word, and the Son's son will have a son, so on with out limit. He who affirms the impossibility of the Son, if there is to be a Son, needing a son makes the same apply to the Father. In the same way, they are compelled to say that the Spirit has a spirit, because they say with regard to it that the Father has a Spirit, and that the Spirit's spirit has a spirit, so on without limit.

They are compelled to say that the Son has a spirit and the Spirit has a son, just as the Father has a Son and Spirit, because their sharing with him in eternity compels comparison. For, given their teaching about the sharing of the Son with the Father in eternity, they cannot affirm of him a thing through which there is need for a Son, without the Son and the Spirit. And they are not able to say that his being Father and the Son's being his Son do not derive from his essence because it derives from a cause. For even though they might derive this from a cause, they cannot avoid saying that since he is what he is in his essence he has to be Father and knowing, and the Son, who is Knowledge and Word, has to be his Son and Knowledge and Word. So what shares with him in his being eternal has to have this attribute in the respect that he has to. In this is a confirmation of what we have compelled them to acknowledge above. We have already shown what puts a stop to this matter in the argument against the *Kullābiyya* in their teaching that the almighty One is knowing, and that knowledge cannot be knowing, and that they will both share in eternity because his being must be knowing through a determinant not through his essence.<sup>35</sup> What we have presented there puts a stop to this matter.

12. In this manner our masters compelled them to accept the teaching that each of the hypostases is a Divinity. For if the Son and Spirit share with the Father in eternity, what necessarily makes him a Divinity makes them Divinities. But each of these two being a Divinity proves the principle of their doctrine wrong. For they reach it by having to affirm of the eternal One, the Agent, two hypostases of Word and Spirit, since it is impossible for him to be living except by Life and

---

<sup>35</sup> Again, this argument will have been made in a lost earlier section of the *Mughnī*, as part of ‘Abd al-Jabbār's presentation of his own doctrine of the divine attributes and his arguments against Muslim opponents who maintained the reality of attributes.

إلا بعلم، وجب إثبات أقنومين كلمة وروح. فإذا وجب بما ذكرناه كون كل واحد من ذلك إلهاً، بطل هذا الطريق، ووجب أن نشبت لكل واحد من الأقانيم أقنومين آخرين، ويجب في كل واحد منهما مثل ذلك أيضاً. وهذا يوجب إثبات آلهة لا نهاية لها على ما ألزمت الكلاسيّة في هذا الباب، وكل وجه أفسدنا به مذاهبهم فهو مبطل لمذهب النصارى، لأنّ مذهبيهما متقاربان في المعنى وإن اختلفا في الألفاظ، بل مذهب الكلاسيّة أبلغ في الفساد، لإثباتهم مع الله تعالى من المعاني بعدد ما يستحقّه من الصفات، فقد زادوا في إثبات القديماء على النصارى.

فإن قالوا: لا يلزمنا على قولنا بالأقانيم الثلاثة إثبات ثلاثة آلهة، لأنّا نقول إنّها أقانيم ثلاثة وإنّه جوهر واحد في الحقيقة، وإنّا يلزمنا على ذلك<sup>1</sup> لو أثبتناها متغايرة وأثبتنا الجوهر غيرها؛ قيل له: إنّ كلّ كلام توصل به إلى إفساد المذهب لم يسقط باختلاف العبارة عن ذلك المذهب، لأنّ الوجه في إفساد المذهب به من حيث المعنى لا من حيث العبارة. فاختلاف العبارات عنه في أنّه لا يؤثر فيه كاختلاف العبارات بحسب اختلاف اللغات عن المذهب الفاسد في أنّ ما يفسد به لا تتغيّر حاله.

وقد قلنا إنّ النصارى متى خالفت في المعنى فلا بدّ من أن تقول بإثبات ثلاث ذوات في الأزل، أب وابن وروح، وتجعل الروح حياة، لها صار حيّاً، والابن علماً، له صار عالماً. ومتى قالوا بذلك، فما ألزمتهم من إيجاب ثلاثة آلهة لازم لا محالة، ولا تؤثر فيه العبارات. فقولهم: "إنّا لا نقول في الأقانيم

<sup>1</sup>خ: يلزمنا ذلك.

knowing except by Knowledge. But if each of them must be a Divinity, according to what we have mentioned, this method is proved false, and we must affirm of each of the hypostases two other hypostases, and the same must apply to these two as well.<sup>36</sup> This necessitates affirming Divinities without limit, according to what we have compelled the *Kullābiyya* to accept on this point. And every issue on which we have thwarted their beliefs disproves the Christians’ belief because the two beliefs are close in meaning even though they differ in expression,<sup>37</sup> though the *Kullābiyya*’s belief is more corrupt because of their affirming entities in addition to God almighty according to the number of attributes he merits. So they make greater claims about eternals than the Christians.

But if they say: According to our teaching about the three hypostases, it does not compel us to affirm three Divinities, because we say that they are three hypostases and he is one substance in reality. It would only compel us to this if we were to affirm that they were separate from one another and that the substance was other than them. Say to this: The arguments by which the falseness of the belief is inferred cannot all be put aside by changing the expression of the belief, because it is through meaning that the belief is shown false and not expression. Difference of expressions about it having no effect on it is like the difference of expressions following the difference of languages about a false belief not showing it false: its condition is not changed.

We have already said that although the Christians differ over the meaning, they cannot avoid teaching the affirmation of three essences in eternity, Father, Son and Spirit, and making the Spirit Life, by which he is living, and the Son Knowledge, by whom he is knowing. As long as they say this, the acknowledgement of three Divinities that we have compelled them to is undoubtedly binding, and expressions have no

---

<sup>36</sup> The problem for the Christians here is that while they explain the Son and Holy Spirit as attributes of the Father, according to the logic of Muslim attributes doctrine, and thus no more than qualifiers of his essence, they still assert that there is equality between the three hypostases and thus some clear distinction between them, leading to the assertion of three gods. The contradiction implicit in the limitations of the comparison between the hypostases and divine attributes was evidently identified at an early stage by Muslim polemicists.

<sup>37</sup> Writing at about this time, Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 230, tells how a certain Pethion (Fathiūn), a Christian with whom Ibn Kullāb used to converse, claimed that he had taught Ibn Kullāb the principle that the Word of God was God. By inference, the Kullābī doctrine of the divine attributes is ascribed Christian origins.

إنّها متغايرة وإنّها ليست غيراً للجوهر“، كقول الكلابيّة في الصفات إنّها ليست غير الله، فكما أن هذا القول منهم لا يؤثر فيما ألزمناهم، فكذلك القول في النصارى.

13. على أن من النصارى من يزعم أن الأقاليم متغايرة من حيث كانت أقاليم، وإن كان الجوهر واحداً فلا يصحّ لهم دفع ما ألزمناهم بما سألوا عنه. على أنّهم متى قالوا بذلك، لزمهم كون الإله متغيراً من وجه غير متغير من وجه آخر، وهذا في الاستحالة بمنزلة كون الأشياء مختلفة من وجه متّفقة من وجه، بل هو أكد منه، لأنّ كون الأشياء غير متغايرة يوجب نقض<sup>1</sup> كونها متغايرة، ويوجب ذلك كونه شيئاً واحداً أو أشياء.

وعلى هذا الوجه ألزمهم شيوخننا القول بتناقض مذهبهم وأنّهم قائلون به على وجه لا يُعقل، لأنّ كون الثلاثة واحداً وكون الواحد ثلاثة في الحقيقة لا يُعقل، سواء قالوا إنّ واحد من الوجه الذي هو ثلاثة أو من غير ذلك الوجه. وإنّما نقول نحن في الشيء الداخل في جملة العشرة إنّّه ليس بغير له إذا أضفته إلى العشرة، في أنّه غير لكل واحد منه إذا أفردته باللفظ من جهة إطلاق هذه اللفظة، وإلاّ فهو في الحقيقة غيراً له، لأنّه ذات غير سائر الذوات ويختصّ بصفات، ويصحّ أن يختصّ بها دون سائر الذوات، ولا اعتبار بالألفاظ في ذلك.

14. وإن ذهبوا في مقالتهن هذا المذهب فقد أعطوا ما أردناه من أن الأقاليم في المعنى متغايرة، ولزمهم ما قدمناه من إثبات آلهة وقدماء لا نهاية لها. ومتى لم يعطوا ذلك، صحّ ما ادّعينا عليهم من التناقض. فإن قالوا: إذا صحّ عندكم كون الآحاد الكثيرة عشرة واحدة والأبعاض الكثيرة إنساناً واحداً وذاتاً واحدة، ولم يكن هذا من قولكم متناقضاً، فهلاّ أجزتم لنا القول بأنّه جوهر واحد ثلاثة أقاليم؟ قيل له: إنّنا نثبت آحاد العشرة متغايرة في الحقيقة ونصّفها

<sup>1</sup>ط: نقص.



effect upon it. For their teaching, ‘We do not say that the hypostases are different from one another or that they are other than the substance’, is like the teaching of the *Kullābiyya* that the attributes are not other than God. So, just as this teaching from these has no effect upon what we have compelled them to accept, the same can be said about the Christians.

13. However, among the Christians are those who claim that the hypostases are different from one another in as much as they are hypostases, even though the substance is one. They cannot properly reject what we have compelled them to accept in what they have been asked. As long as they say this, they have to accept that the Divinity is different from himself in one respect and not different from himself in another. And this is an impossibility of the order of things being distinguished in one respect and uniform in another, though it is more glaring because things not being different from themselves is necessarily incompatible with their being different from themselves, and this entails his being one thing or things.

In this respect our masters compelled them to accept teaching that contradicts their faith, and to accept that they teach about it in an irrational manner. For the three truly being one and the one being three is irrational, equivalent to them saying that he is one in the way that he is three or in some other way. We ourselves say that a thing that is part of a group of ten is not other than it as though it was other than each unit in it if I have placed it among the ten, when I refer to it specifically in the general way of speaking. But it really is other than it, because it is an essence different from other essences and specified by attributes, and appropriately specified by them distinct from other essences. And terminology is not to be taken into account in this.

14. Even though they hold this belief in their teaching, they have to concede what we mean, that the hypostases are different from one another in significance, and they have to accept what we have already said about acknowledging divinities and eternal beings without limit. But as long as they will not concede this, the inconsistency we have ascribed to them stands. So if they say: ‘If in your view it is right for many units to be one ten, and the many parts to be one human and one essence, and this is not inconsistent in your teaching, then why will you not allow us to say that he is one substance and three hypostases?’; say to this: We acknowledge ten units that are truly different from one

بقولنا عشرة لتبين بهذه الجملة من سائر الأعداد وجملها، ونقول "واحدة" لتبين أنه من هذه الجملة مرة واحدة. وليس في ذلك تناقض إذا وقعت على المعانى التى أوردناها.

وليس يصحّ ذلك لكم، لأنكم لا تثبتون الأفانيم متغايرة، ولا تفيدوا بقولكم "جوهر واحد" أنها جملة واحدة، وكذلك لا تجروا هذه اللفظة على سائر المعدودات<sup>1</sup> إذا بلغت ثلاثة كإجرائنا لفظة العشرة على كلّ معدود بلغ هذا المبلغ. فقد بان زوال التناقض عمّا قلناه ولزومه لما قلتموه. وإنّا نريد بقولنا فى أبعاد الإنسان إنّها أبعاد كثيرة نريد بذلك أنّ كلّ بعض منها غير الآخر ويصلح لما لا يصلح له الآخر، ونعنى بقولنا "إنسان واحد" إنّها جملة تشتمل على هذه الأبعاد يصحّ أن تختصّ بكونها فاعلة واحدة وقادرة واحدة، وذلك معقول لا تناقض فيه. ولا يتأتى لكم مثله، لأنكم لا تفيدون بقولكم "جوهر واحد" جملة ذات أفانيم تختصّ بحكم لبنية حصلت فيها أو ما يجرى مجراها. فالتناقض لازم على قولكم زائل عنا فيما قلناه.

15. وبعد، فإن الذى ادّعيناه عليهم من التناقض أردنا به تناقض المعنى وأنّه لا يصحّ اعتقاده دون تناقض الألفاظ كما ندّعيه على من قال فى الشىء الواحد أنّه موجود معدوم، وفى الجوهر الواحد أنّه أسود وأبيض. وقد علم أنّه، وإن تمكن من هذه العبارة، أنّه غير متمكن من اعتقاد ما تفيد، فذلك القول فيما ألزمنه النصارى أنّا ادّعينا أن ما قالوه من كون الشىء الواحد ثلاثة فى الحقيقة من وجه واحد أو وجهين لا يصحّ أن يعتقد، وما لا يصحّ اعتقاده لم يكن للتشاغل بإفساده وجه. لأنّا إنّما نتوصل بالشىء إلى إفساد ما

another, and we describe them by saying ‘ten’ in order to distinguish this group from other amounts and their groups. And we say ‘one’ in order to make clear that it is from this group at any time. There is no inconsistency in this if it is applied in the senses we have stated.

This cannot be right for you, because you do not affirm that the hypostases are different from one another, and you do not mean by your words ‘one substance’ that it is one group, and similarly you do not apply this term to other countables if they come to three in the way that we apply the term ten to every countable that comes to this amount. So it is clear that inconsistency disappears from what we say but is entailed by what you say. And by our statement about the parts of a human we only mean that they are many parts, meaning by this that each part of them is different from another and is suited to what another is not. And by our term ‘one human’ we mean that this is a totality that includes these parts that may appropriately be specified as one acting being and one powerful being. This is reasonable, and there is no inconsistency in it. But anything like this is not feasible for you, because you do not mean by your words ‘one substance’ a totality of actual hypostases specified in accordance with the make-up that is to be found in it or something that can be treated in the same way as it. So inconsistency is involved in what you say, but disappears from what we say.

15. Furthermore, by the inconsistency we allege against them we mean inconsistency of meaning in which it is wrong to believe, and not inconsistency of wording, as we would claim against someone who said that the same thing was existent and non-existent, and that the same substance<sup>38</sup> was black and white. It is well-known that while this is possible in a manner of speaking, it is not possible in a belief that will be of avail. It is the same with the argument about what we have compelled the Christians to accept: we have claimed that what they say about one thing being in reality three in one or two respects cannot properly be believed. And there is no reason to be concerned about showing the error of what should not properly be believed, for we only bother to show the error of something that can properly be believed in order to remove conviction from belief in it. But there is no point

---

<sup>38</sup> Here ‘Abd al-Jabbār uses the term *jawhar* in its normal *kalām* sense of a concrete unit of material reality.

يصحّ أن يعتقد لنزِيل به المعتقد عن اعتقاده، فأما ما قد علمنا أنّ اعتقاده غير ممكن، فلا وجه لطلب أمر يُزال به.

16. وعلى هذا الوجه يلزمهم أن يقولوا في القديم إنّهُ مختلف متّفق، لأنّه من حيث كان أقانيم يجب أن يكون مختلفاً، ومن حيث كان جوهرّاً واحداً يجب كونه متّفقا. وكون الأشياء متّفقة مختلفة مستحيل. ولا يمكنهم القول بأنّها متّفقة في الذوات مختلفة في الصفات التي لا ترجع إلى الذوات بل ترجع إلى المعاني وما جرى مجراها، لأن من قولهم إنّ جوهر الأب يستحيل أن يكون إلّا إِباً عالمّاً حياً، وكذلك قولهم في كلّ أقنوم. فقد صحّ ما ألزمناهم من القول بأنّها متّفقة في الذوات مختلفة، وهذا يوجب نفى الشئ وإثباته، لأنّه لا فرق بين كون الشئ مثلاً لغيره ومخالفاً له وبين كونه موجوداً معدوماً، لأن كونه مخالفاً يقتضى نفى ما يوجب كونه موافقاً لإثباته على ما بيّناه في باب الصفات.

فأما من قال منهم: ”إنّا لا نقول في الأقانيم إنّها مختلفة“، هرباً من هذا الكلام، فلا عاصم لهم من لزومه لأنّ الكلام على المعنى دون العبارة. فهو في هذا القول بمنزلة من قال في الشئ الواحد إنّهُ سواد طعم، فألزمناه كونه متّفقاً مختلفاً، فرام في إسقاط ذلك بالامتناع من هذه العبارات، وهذا بيّن.

17. وقد ألزمهم شيخنا أبو علي، رحمه الله، القول بأكثر من الأقانيم الثلاثة، أو إبطال مذهبهم، وذلك أنّه قال لهم: إذا كنتم تثبتون الأقانيم الثلاثة من حيث استحال عندكم كونه تعالى فاعلا إلّا وهو حيّ عالم، فأثبتتم له علماً

<sup>1</sup>خ: أو من حيث استحال عندكم.

in seeking to undermine what we already know involves belief that is unviable.

16. In this respect they are obliged to say that the eternal One is differentiated and uniform, for in as much as he is hypostases he must be differentiated, and in as much as he is one substance he must be uniform. But it is impossible for things to be uniform and differentiated. And they cannot say that they are uniform as essences and differentiated as attributes which do not derive from essences but from determinants and equivalent things,<sup>39</sup> for in their teaching is that the substance of the Father can only be Father, knowing and living, and it is the same with their teaching about every hypostasis. So the statement which we compel them to accept, that as essences they are uniform and differentiated, is right, necessitating the denial and affirmation of a thing, because there is no difference between a thing being similar to and differentiated from something other than it, and its being existent and non-existent. For its being differentiated means denying what its being uniform means affirming, as we have demonstrated in the chapter on the attributes.<sup>40</sup>

Concerning what one of them says, ‘We do not say that the hypostases are differentiated’, as an escape from this argument, there is no protection for them from what it involves because the argument is about the meaning not the expression. So in saying this he is just like someone who says that the same thing is blackness and flavour. And so we have compelled him to acknowledge that he is uniform and differentiated, though he has attempted to rule out such expressions as these in excluding this, and this is evident.

17. Our master Abū ‘Alī,<sup>41</sup> may God have mercy on him, compelled them to say that there are more than three hypostases or that their faith is false. For he said to them: If you affirm the three hypostases because in your view the Almighty cannot be acting unless he is living

---

<sup>39</sup> Again ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to this particularly problematic point for Mu‘tazilī thinking, that if the differentiation within the Godhead (or anything else) is imputed to actually existent attributes that give rise to the qualities that are ascribed to it, then it cannot be called uniform or one in an absolute sense.

<sup>40</sup> This would be in a lost early part of the *Mughnī*.

<sup>41</sup> On the arguments taken from Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī’s refutation in §§17–20, cf. Thomas, ‘Mu‘tazilī Response’, pp. 289–300. These sections comprise brief summaries of Abū ‘Alī’s points, together with amplifications by ‘Abd al-Jabbār himself.

وهو الابن والكلمة وروحاً وهى الحياة، فيجب أن تثبتوا له قدرة، لأنّ الفعل لا يصحّ إلاّ من قادر، وحاجة الفعل إلى كون فاعله قادراً أكد من حاجته إلى كونه حيّاً عالمّاً.

ويلزمكم إثبات سمع له وبصر وإدراك من حيث كان الحيّ يجب أن يكون سميعاً بصيراً مدرّكاً، وتثبتوا له إرادة من حيث كان الفاعل للأفعال مع علمه بها لا بدّ من كونه مريداً، وتثبتوا له عزّاً وعظمة ووحداً من حيث كان عزيزاً عظيماً واحداً. فإن نفوا كونه قادراً، وجب نفى كونه حيّاً عالمّاً، وفي ذلك إبطال الأقانيم.

وإن أثبتوه قادراً لا بقدرة بل لذاته، وجب لمثله كونه عالمّاً حيّاً لذاته لا بعلم وحياة. وإن أثبتوه قادراً بقدرة، وجعلوا قدرته هى حياته أو علمه، وجب لمثله أن يكون علمه هى حياته وكلمته هى حياته، وفي هذا وجوب الاختصار على أقنومين. ومتى جاز ذلك، وإن كان بخلاف الشاهد، ليجوزنّ كونه عالمّاً حيّاً لا لمعنى أصلاً، وإن كان بخلاف الشاهد، فإن أثبتوا لله قدرة سوى العلم والحياة وسمعاً وبصراً وإدراكاً، لزمهم إثبات أقانيم كثيرة، وفي ذلك إبطال القول بالنصرانية.

18. ولا يصحّ لهم أن يقولوا: "إنّ كونه حيّاً من غير أن يكون قادراً يصحّ، ولا يصحّ كونه حيّاً من غير كونه عالمّاً"، لأنّ الأمر فيهما سواء فى أن الحيّ لا<sup>2</sup> يخلو منهما. وحالهما فى الشاهد يتفق فى أنّه لا حيّ نعقله يخلو من علم وقدرة على بعض الوجوه، ولا فصل بينهما فى أن خلوا الحيّ من أحدهما نقص لا محالة. فقد صحّ أن ما ذكره لازم لهم وموجب لبطلان مذهبهم.

<sup>1</sup>خ: ليجوزن الشاهد فإن اثبتوا لله قدرة. <sup>2</sup>ط: قد.

and knowing, and thus you affirm Knowledge of him which is the Son and the Word, and Spirit which is Life, then you have to affirm power of him, because an act can only come from a powerful being. And the need for the agent of an action to be powerful is more urgent than the need for him to be living and knowing.

You are compelled to affirm hearing, sight and perception of him, for the reason that a living being must be hearing, seeing and perceiving.<sup>42</sup> And affirm will of him, for the reason that the agent of actions, in addition to his knowledge of them, must be willing. And affirm of him might, power and oneness, for the reason that he is mighty, powerful and one. And if they deny that he is powerful, it must also be denied that he is living and knowing, and in this the hypostases are disproved.

And if they affirm that he is powerful not by power but through his essence, then in the same way he must be knowing and living through his essence, not by Knowledge and Life. And if they affirm that he is powerful by power, and they make his power his Life or his Knowledge, then by the same token his Knowledge must be his Life and his Word his Life, which necessarily reduces the two hypostases. As long as this is the case, even though it is contrary to evidence, he will be knowing and living through no entity at all, although it is contrary to evidence. But if they affirm that God has power which is separate from Knowledge and Life, and hearing, sight and perception, they have to affirm many hypostases, in which the teaching about Christianity is disproved.

18. They cannot rightly say: ‘It is right for him to be living without being powerful, though it is not right for him to be living without being knowing’, because the position with regard to both is the same, in that a living being does not lack either of them. Their status in the perceptible world is equivalent, in that there is no living being of which we are aware that lacks knowledge and power in any respect. And there is no difference between them, in that a living being’s lack of either of them is undoubtedly a defect. So they are rightly compelled to accept what we refer to, and it inevitably disproves their teaching.

---

<sup>42</sup> This had become a familiar argument by this time. Cf. al-Nāshī, above pp. 74–75, §35, and al-Bāqillānī, above pp. 154–157, §10.

وقد ألزمهم القول بأنه حيّ لا بحياة أو القول بأن الحياة حيّة، وذلك لأنّه لا يخلو أن يقولوا: "إنّ الحيّ هو الأب دون الأقنومين الآخرين"، أو "هو الأقانيم الثلاثة". فإن قالوا: "إنّه الحيّ"، لزمهم أن يكون هو الفاعل الخالق الإله، وفي ذلك إبطال قولهم<sup>1</sup> إنّ الإله هو الأقانيم الثلاثة؛ وإن قالوا إنّ الحيّ هو الأقانيم الثلاثة ليستمر المذهب، فيجب أن تكون الحياة حيّة مع الأب. وهذا مستحيل، لأنّ العلة إذا أوجبت حكماً لغيرها، لم يصحّ أن توجب ذلك الحكم لنفسها مع غيرها، كما لا يصحّ أن توجه لنفسها وحدها، ولذلك لا يصحّ كون العلم عالماً<sup>2</sup> في نفسه ومع غيره، وإن صح أن يوجب كون غيره عالماً.

ومتى جوزوا أن تكون الحياة حيّة، فتوجب هذه الصفة لنفسها مع غيرها، لزمهم تجويز كونها حيّة حياة، فهي من حيث كانت حيّة تقتضى حياة كما قالوه في الحيّ، ومن حيث كانت حياة لا تقتضيه. وهذا يوجب إثبات أقانيم لا نهاية لها، ويوجب تجويز كون الحيّ الذي هو الأب حياة بنفسه والاستغناء عن حياة هي غيره. وكذلك السؤال عليهم متى قالوا: "إن الحياة هي حياة الأقنومين الآخرين"، أو "العلم علم الأقنومين"، فلا وجه لإعادته.

19. وألزمهم القول بإثبات ثلاثة فاعلين، لأنّهم إن قالوا: "إنّ الفاعل هو الأب"،<sup>3</sup> لزمهم أن يكون هو الإله، وفي ذلك إبطال قولهم بأنّ الإله جوهر واحد أقانيم ثلاثة، ويكون قولهم كقول الكلاسيّة في أنّ الموصوف هو الإله

<sup>1</sup>م: قولهم المذهب، فيجب أن. <sup>2</sup>م: مخالفاً. <sup>3</sup>خ || م، ط: الإنسان.



And he compelled<sup>43</sup> them to say that he is living not by Life, or to say that Life is living. This is because they must say either, ‘The living One is the Father and not the other two hypostases’, or ‘He is the three hypostases’. If they say, ‘He<sup>44</sup> is the living One’, they have to accept that he is the Agent, Creator and Divinity, and in this their teaching that the Divinity is the three hypostases is shown to be false. But if they say that the living One is the three hypostases so that the teaching can survive, it necessarily follows that Life is living together with the Father. This is impossible, because if a cause confers a status upon something other than itself, it is not right that it can confer this status upon itself as well as this other thing, just as it is not right for it to confer it upon itself alone. In this way, Knowledge cannot be knowing in itself as well as with something other than it, although it may rightly make something other than itself to be knowing.

While they allow Life to be living, so that this attribute must affect itself as well as others, they are compelled to allow its being living to be life, so that in as much as it is living it entails life, as they say about the living One, though in as much as it is life it does not give rise to it.<sup>45</sup> And this requires the affirmation of hypostases without limit, and to allow the living One, who is the Father, to be life to himself and to be independent of Life that is other than him. It is the same with the issue against them when they say, ‘Life is the life of the other two hypostases’, or ‘Knowledge is the knowledge of the two hypostases’, and there is no possibility of recovering from it.

19. He compelled them to accept the teaching about affirming three agents, because if they say, ‘The Agent is the Father’, they have to accept that he is the Divinity. And in this their teaching that the Divinity is one substance and three hypostases is disproved, and their teaching is like that of the *Kullābiyya*, that the Divinity is the one

<sup>43</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār resumes his summary of Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī’s arguments.

<sup>44</sup> I.e. the Father.

<sup>45</sup> This argument is difficult to follow in detail (maybe the original form of the clause *lazimahum tajwīz kawnahā hayyatan hayyāh* was *lazimahum tajwīz kawnahā hayyatan bi-hayyāh* or *li-hayyāh*, ‘they are compelled to allow its being living to be through [an attribute of] life’), but in general terms its contention is that if the hypostasis of Life is itself living, then by virtue of the logic adopted by the Christians this quality must be effected in the hypostasis by an attribute of life, which must itself in turn be living by virtue of its own attribute of life, and so on *ad infinitum*.

دون صفاته.<sup>1</sup> فلا بدّ من القول بأنّ الفعل فعل الأقانيم الثلاثة، وهذا يوجب كون كلّ واحد منها فاعلاً، ووجوب ذلك يوجب كون كلّ واحد حياً قادراً، وذلك يوجب كون كلّ واحد إلهاً، وفي ذلك ترك قولهم. فإن قالوا: "إنّ فعل الثلاثة فعل<sup>2</sup> واحد، فلا يجب ما قلتموه، لأنّ الفعل إذا كان واحداً، لم يجب إثبات ثلاثة فاعلين، بل يجب إثباتهم فاعلاً واحداً"، قيل لهم: إن الفعل الواحد يستحيل كونه فاعلاً لفاعلين، لأنّ ذلك يوجب أن يصحّ من أحدهم أن يفعله ومن الآخر أن يتركه، وهذا ممّا قدمنا<sup>3</sup> فسادَه من قبل. فيجب أن يكون فعل كلّ واحد منهم غير فعل صاحبه كما أن كلّ واحد منهم غير صاحبه.

فإن قالوا: "إنّ الفعل فعل لواحد هو ثلاثة"، قيل لهم: لا فرق بين إثبات فاعلاً لثلاثة وبين إثباته فاعلاً لفاعل هو ثلاثة في حقيقة إضافة الفعل إليهم. فإن قالوا: "كلّ واحد منهم فاعل مع الآخرين، لا أن كلّ واحد منهم فاعل في الحقيقة"، قيل لهم: هلاًّ قلتم إنّهم ثلاثة فاعلين كما كان كلّ واحد منهم فاعلاً مع الآخر؟ فإن قالوا: "كلّ واحد من الثلاثة بعض الفاعل، وثلاثتهم فاعل واحد"، قيل لهم: هذا يوجب جواز التبعض على الإله الفاعل، ويوجب أن تجوزوا<sup>4</sup> كون الحياة بعضاً، ويوجب جواز كون الفعل بعضاً للفاعل كجواز كون الحياة بعضاً له، لأنّ كونه فاعلاً ولا فعل يستحيل، كما أن كونه حياً ولا حياة يستحيل.

20. وألزمهم في الحياة، إذا لم يصحّ أن يقال إنّها بعض له ولا هي هو، أن تكون غيره لأنّه لا منزلة رابعة لذلك. وهذا يوجب أن يشبّوا الحياة غير الإله

<sup>1</sup>م: حياته. <sup>2</sup>خ: فعل فلا يجب. <sup>3</sup>خ: بينا. <sup>4</sup>ط: يجوزوا.

attributed and not his attributes.<sup>46</sup> So there is no alternative to saying that the action is the action of the three hypostases, and this requires each of them to be an agent, and this requirement requires each to be living and powerful, and this requires each to be divine, in which lies the abandonment of their teaching. But if they say: ‘The action of the three is one action, so what you say is not binding, because if the action is one it does not necessitate affirming three agents but only one’; say to them: It is impossible for one action to be the action of two agents, because this would require one of them to perform it and the other not. We have already shown above that this is incorrect.<sup>47</sup> So the action of each one of them must necessarily be different from the action of his companion, just as each of them will be different from his companion.

If they say: ‘The action is an action of One who is three’; say to them: There is no difference between affirming an action of three and affirming it as an action of an Agent who is three in reality with the action ascribed to them.<sup>48</sup> If they say: ‘Each of them is an Agent together with the other two, though each of them is not an Agent in reality’; say to them: Have you not said that they are three agents just as each one of them is an Agent together with the other two? If they say: ‘Each one of the three is part of the Agent, and the three of them are one Agent’; say to them: This requires the divine Agent to be divided up, and it requires you to allow that Life is a part, and it requires allowing the action to be part of the Agent, like allowing Life to be part of him, because it is impossible for him to be an Agent and there to be no action, just as his being living with no Life is impossible.

20. He compelled<sup>49</sup> them to accept that Life is other than him, if it cannot be said that it is part of him or is not him, because there is no fourth position to this.<sup>50</sup> This requires them to affirm that Life is

<sup>46</sup> The consequence of explaining the hypostases as attributes is that they cease to have the same status as the divine essence, which in Kullābī/Ash‘arī terms is the reality of God himself. The appearance of the term *Kullābīyya* here indicates that ‘Abd al-Jabbār has added his own comments to Abū ‘Alī’s point.

<sup>47</sup> This would be in a lost early part of the *Mughnī*.

<sup>48</sup> The Christians’ interpretation is effectively resolvable into the statement that there are three agents, which ‘Abd al-Jabbār has just refuted.

<sup>49</sup> Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī again.

<sup>50</sup> The distinction between Life being other than God and it not being God is that in the latter case it remains within the divine reality, like the attributes in the Kullābī/Ash‘arī Godhead (*lā hiya huwa wa-la hiya ghayruhi*), while in the former it is completely separate from God.

وأن يكون القديم هو الصانع وحده دون الحياة والعلم، ويبطل قولهم عند ذلك بما كلّمنا به من أثبت معه علماً وقدرة قديمين. وإن قالوا: إن الحياة هي الحيّ، فقد أقرّوا بالتوحيد. فقد صحّ بطلان قولهم بأنّ الحياة بعضه أو هي هو أو غيره. فإذا أى قول من ذلك تمسكوا به، لزمهم ترك النصرانيّة. وقد ألزمهم القول بإثباته فاعلاً فيما لم يزل، على قولهم إنّ أب فيما لم يزل، لأنّ المعقول أنّ الابن يحدث ويصير الأب به أباً كما يحدث الفعل ويصير به الفاعل فاعلاً.<sup>1</sup> فإذا لم يتناقض عندهم كونه أباً وولداً فيما لم يزل، فكذلك كونه.

وألزمهم أن قالوا: إنّ متبعّض ذو أبعاد ثلاثة بأنّه جسم متغاير وبأنّه محدث. وألزمهم القول بأن كلّ واحد من الأقسام يجب أن يكون قديماً وموجوداً لمعنى، كما قالوا إنّ القديم عالم حيّ لمعنى، لأنّه لا يصحّ أن ينفوا كونها قديمة موجودة وكون الأب قديماً موجوداً لما في ذلك من إثباته محدثاً معدوماً. ومتى قالوا إنّ موجود لا لعلّة وجب بمثله أن يكون حياً عالماً<sup>2</sup> لا بروح ولا بابن، لأنّه كما يجب كونه موجوداً فيما لم يزل ولا يزال، فكذلك يجب كونه عالماً حياً.

<sup>1</sup> م: فاعلاً وألزمهم أن قالوا. <sup>2</sup> ط: عالمياً.

other than the Divinity, and that the eternal One is the Maker alone without Life and Knowledge. With this their teaching is proved false, according to what we have argued about affirming Knowledge and Power as eternal with him. If they say: ‘Life is the living One’, they will be asserting the oneness of God. So their teaching that Life is part of him or is him or is other than him is definitely false. For, whichever of these teachings they cling to, they are forced to abandon Christianity.

He compelled them to accept the teaching that affirms he is an Agent in eternity, following their teaching that he is Father in eternity. For it is common sense that a son comes into being and that a father becomes father through him, just as an action comes into being and through it the agent becomes an agent. So if it is not self-contradictory to them for him to be Father and child in eternity, it is the same with his being an Agent.<sup>51</sup>

He compelled them to say: He is divided up, possessor of three parts, and so he is a body internally differentiated, and has come into being.<sup>52</sup> He compelled them to accept the teaching that each of the hypostases must be eternal and existing by virtue of something, just as they say the eternal One is knowing and living by virtue of something. For they cannot deny that they are eternal and existent or that the Father is eternal and existent, since this leads to the affirmation that he has come into being or is non-existent. But as long as they say he is existent through no cause, then similarly he must be living and knowing not through Spirit or Son. For, just as he must be existing from eternity and to eternity, so he must be knowing and living.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> This brief argument from Abū ‘Alī addresses the issue of the eternal begetting of the Son by the Father either intentionally or not. In the form it is expressed here it is made particularly difficult, because God’s action of begetting is equated with the begetting of human fathers and so is readily identified as taking place at a point in time, though must be eternal because God is the Agent. This raises the spectre of a plurality of eternals, because God’s eternal activity must have an object.

<sup>52</sup> This argument relies on the principle that composite things have been assembled together by agents outside themselves, and as the results of higher causes must be contingent and temporal.

<sup>53</sup> This argument of Abū ‘Alī appears to rely on the distinction he maintains between God as eternal and as knowing, living, etc. The latter are predications that can be made of God, but the former is God himself (cf. R.M. Frank, *Beings and their Attributes, the Teaching of the Basrian School of the Mu’tazila in the Classical Period*, Albany NY, 1978, pp. 18–19). This proof would apply as much to the Ash’arīs and their predecessors, who taught about the reality of attributes, as to the Christians.

وبيّن أنّه لا يمكنهم أن يقولوا في علمه وحياته إنّها صفات وإنّها لا توصف، لأنّ ذلك يبطل بما يبطل به مذهب الكلائية ولأنّها تصف كلّ واحد من الأقانيم بما تميزه عن غيره.

21. وقد ألزموا على قولهم إنّ جوهر الأقانيم الثلاثة جوهر واحد القول بأنّ الابن يستحقّ كلّ ما يستحقّه الأب من الصفات من حيث كان جوهره كجوهره. وإلاّ فإنّ صحّ أن يكون مخالفاً له، وإن كان جوهره كجوهره، ليجوز خروج الأب من أن يكون أباً والابن من أن يكون ابناً، وإن كان إنّما كان كذلك لجوهره، لأنّ إثبات مثل الشيء في جوهره مع مخالفته له في صفته الراجعة إلى جوهره، إذا صحّ، صحّ أيضاً خروج الشيء عن جوهره. وهذا يوجب عليهم أن لا يأمنوا قدم الأب والابن، وخروج الأب من أن يكون أباً قديماً.

وألزموا القول بأنّها مختلفة وأن تكون العلّة في اختلافها ما يوجب اتّفاقها، لأنّهم إن قالوا: "إن الأقانيم مختلفة لا لوجه يوجب اختلافها"، لم يصح؛ فإن قالوا: "إنّا اختلفت لأعيانها وجوهرها"، فهذا يوجب، إذا كان جوهرها جوهرًا واحدًا أن تكون متّفقة، وإلاّ فيجب أن تكون مختلفة في الجوهرية، كما أنّها مختلفة في الأفنوميّة. وهذا ممّا لا تقول به الملكانيّة واليعقوبيّة متى قالت بجواز كونه مختلفًا من جهة، فإنّه يلزمها القول بأنّها مختلفة من الجهة التي هي متّفقة منها.

ويلزمهم أن يكون الابن أباً إذا كان جوهر الابن هو جوهر الأب؛ ويلزمهم أن يثبتوا الابن أباً إذا كان جوهر الابن هو جوهر الأب؛ ويلزمهم أن يثبتوا

<sup>1</sup>ط: الراجعة. <sup>2</sup>ط: عدم.

He demonstrated that it is not possible for them to say that his Knowledge and Life are attributes and that they cannot be described, because this is proved wrong by what the teachings of the *Kullābiyya* are proved wrong by, and because they describe each of the hypostases by what distinguishes it from the others.<sup>54</sup>

21. According to their teaching that the substance of the three hypostases is one substance, they are compelled to accept the teaching that the Son is entitled to all the attributes to which the Father is entitled, because his substance is like his substance. If not, then if he can be differentiated from him even though his substance is like his substance, the Father must be allowed to cease being Father and the Son being Son, even though he is still of his substance. For if it is possible to affirm something that is like a thing in its substance, and also differentiated from it in its attribute that derives from its substance, the thing can also be excluded from its substance. This compels them not to believe in the eternity of the Father and the Son, and to accept that the Father ceases to be eternally Father.

They<sup>55</sup> are compelled to accept the teaching that they<sup>56</sup> are distinguished and that the cause of their being distinct is what forces them to be uniform. For if they say: ‘The hypostases are distinguished for no reason that forces them to be distinguished’, this is not right. So if they say: ‘They are distinguished by their own selves and their substance’; then if their substance is one, this requires them to be uniform, and if not they must be distinguished in substantiality, just as they are distinguished in hypostaticity. The Melkites and Jacobites do not teach this kind of thing, even though they teach about conceding that he is distinguished in one respect. So they must accept the teaching that they are distinguished in the respect in which they are uniform.

It compels them to accept that the Son is Father if the substance of the Son is the substance of the Father. It compels them to affirm that the Son is Father if the substance of the Son is the substance of the

---

<sup>54</sup> Abū ‘Alī presumably borrowed this argument from his own attacks on Muslim opponents who advocated the existence of attributes. His point is that if they are identified as attributes, the hypostases can be distinguished from God himself as well as from one another, and so they must be formally identifiable from God.

<sup>55</sup> The Christians.

<sup>56</sup> The hypostases.

الابن أباً لأن الأبوة عندهم من صفات الإله ومما يوجب إنتفاء النقص، فيجب أن يكون الابن أباً، وإلا كان منقوصاً. ولا يصحّ القول بأن الأبوة من صفات الكمال والإلهية، إلاّ والبنوة بالضد منها.

22. ويقال للملكية في قولها إنّ الجوهر غير الأقانيم وإن لم تكن الأقانيم غيره: كيف يصحّ كون الجوهر غيرها، وهى ليست بغير له؟ وكيف يعقل ذلك؟ وإذا جاز، فهلاًّ جاز أن يكون الجوهر غيرها في الحقيقة، وإن كانت هى هو على الحقيقة؟ ومتى تناقض كونها هى الجوهر وكون الجوهر غيرها، فيجب أن يتناقض كونها ليست بغير للجوهر وكون الجوهر غيرها.

وبعد، فإن الأقانيم، إذا كانت ثلاثة، ثم جعلوا الجوهر غيرها، فيجب أن يكونوا مثبتين لرابع، وفي ذلك ترك قولهم. وإن زعموا أنّهم يرجعون بالجوهر إلى واحد منها، فقد نقضوا قولهم إنّ الجوهر غيرها، ووجب كون الشئ غيراً لنفسه، وهذا تجاهل.

ولا يصحّ أن يقولوا إنّ الجوهر ليس برابع، ولا هو بواحد من الثلاثة، لأنّ ذلك في الاستحالة في حكم ما قدمناه، لأنّه لا فرق بين القول بأنّه غيرها وليس برابع لها ولا بواحد منها وبين القول بأنّه غيرها وهو كواحد منها.

وبعد، فلا يخلو الإله من أن يكون هو الجوهر دون الأقانيم أو الأقانيم دونه أوهما. فإن كان هو الجوهر، وعندهم أن الجوهر غير الأقانيم، لزمهم إخراج الأب والابن والروح من الإلهية. فإن قالوا: ”إنّ الإله هو الأقانيم



Father.<sup>57</sup> It compels them to affirm that the Son is Father, because in their view fatherhood is among the attributes of the Divinity and part of what entails the denial of deficiency. So it necessarily follows that the Son is Father, or otherwise that he is deficient. And the teaching that fatherhood is among the attributes of perfection and divinity is wrong, unless sonship is the opposite of them.

22. Say to the Melkites concerning their teaching that the substance is other than the hypostases, although the hypostases are not other than it.<sup>58</sup> How can the substance be other than them, when they are not other than it? And how can this be reasonable? If this is conceivable, then why is it not for the substance to be other than them in reality, even though they are it in reality? As long as it is contradictory for them to be the substance and the substance to be other than them, it must be contradictory for them not to be other than the substance and the substance to be other than them.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, if the hypostases are three, and then they make the substance other than them, they must be affirming a fourth, and in this is the abandonment of their teaching. And if they claim that they reduce the substance to one of them, they will have contradicted their teaching that the substance is other than them, and a thing will have to be other than itself; this is affected ignorance.

They cannot rightly say that the substance is not a fourth, or that it is one of the three, because according to the judgement we discussed earlier this is an impossibility. For there is no difference between saying that it is other than them and is not a fourth to them or one of them, and between saying that it is other than them and is like one of them.

Furthermore, the Divinity can only be the substance and not the hypostases, or the hypostases and not it, or both of them. If it is the substance, and in their view the substance is other than the hypostases, they must exclude the Father, the Son and the Spirit from being the

---

<sup>57</sup> There appears to be a scribal repetition here, though since the second statement begins with a different verb, in ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s original it may have gone on to make a different point.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. §4 above.

<sup>59</sup> The distinction between these statements is very narrow, though what ‘Abd al-Jabbār appears to be getting at is that the Melkites’ rarefied expression points to a real (‘in reality’) contradiction that leaves their doctrine in disarray.

دون الجوهر“، لزمهم أن الجوهر القديم ليس بآله. وهذا ترك قولهم، لأنهم يقولون إن الآله جوهر ذو ثلاثة أقانيم. فإن قالوا: ”إن الآله هو هما“، لزمهم القول بأن الأب والابن والروح ليس بآله، ومن عبد ذلك لم يعبد إلهًا، ومن كفر به لم يكفر بالآله. وإن قالوا: ”إننا نقول إن الآله هو الجوهر الذى هو ذو أقانيم ثلاثة“، قيل لهم: فيجب أن يكون قولكم إن الآله هو الأب والابن وروح القدس غلط، لأن هذه أمور مضافة إلى الآله لا أنها الآله،<sup>1</sup> وهذا ترك للنصرانية وعدول منه إلى مذهب الكلائية.

23. على أن هذا القول يوجب عليهم أن ثلاثة وواحدًا ليس بأربعة، بل يوجب أن يقولوا إن ثلاثة وواحد<sup>2</sup> هو واحد، وهذا يوجب أن قول القائل: ”ثلاثة لا شيء غيرها“، بمنزلة قوله ”ثلاثة وشيء آخر هو غيرها“، ويوجب أن ثلاثة أشياء وشيئًا هو غيرها ثلاثة. وذلك يوجب أن إثبات الغير ونفيه سواء، ويوجب جواز القول بأن واحدًا وواحدًا هو واحد؛ وهذا يوجب أن لا يتزايد المعدود بزيادة الأعداد.

على أنه يجب على<sup>3</sup> قولهم أن تكون الأقانيم جوهرًا، لأن إثبات ما ليس بجوهر قائم بنفسه لا يصح عندهم، فيجب أن يقولوا إن الأقانيم جوهر والجوهر جوهر آخر، وهذا يوجب عليهم إثبات جوهرين هما الآله، وفي ذلك نقض النصرانية. ويقال لهم عند ذلك: أيتفقان أم يختلفان؟ فإن قالوا: ”يتفقان“، فلم صار أحدهما أقانيم دون الآخر؟ وإن قالوا: ”يختلفان“،

<sup>1</sup>خ: إلى الآله لأنها الآله. <sup>2</sup>ط: ثلاثة واحد. <sup>3</sup>م: على عليهم إثبات جوهرين.

Divinity. But if they say: ‘The Divinity is the hypostases apart from the substance’, they are forced to accept that the eternal substance is not Divinity, which is an abandonment of their teaching because they teach that the Divinity is a substance possessing three hypostases. But if they say: ‘The Divinity is both of them’, they are forced to accept the teaching that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are not Divinity,<sup>60</sup> and whoever worships this does not worship a Divinity, and whoever disbelieves in it does not disbelieve in the Divinity. And if they say: ‘We teach that the Divinity is the substance who is the possessor of three hypostases’; say to them: Then it follows that your teaching that the Divinity is Father, Son and Holy Spirit is an error, because these items are related to the Divinity but are not the Divinity. This is an abandonment of Christianity, and a renunciation of it for the opinion of the *Kullābiyya*.<sup>61</sup>

23. However, this teaching compels them to accept that three plus one are not four, but requires them to say that three plus one are one. And this requires that someone saying ‘Three, nothing else’, is equivalent to his saying, ‘Three and something else other than them’, and requires that three things plus a thing other than them must be three. And this entails that denying the other thing and affirming it are the same, and it entails allowing the statement that one and one are one. And this entails that the total does not increase by the addition of numbers.

However, according to their teaching, the hypostases must be a substance because to affirm what is not a substance subsisting of itself is, in their view, not correct. So they have to say that the hypostases are a substance and the substance is another substance. And this compels them to affirm two substances which are both the Divinity, in which is the collapse of Christianity. In connection with this, say to them: Are the two uniform or distinguished? And if they say: ‘The two are uniform’; then why is one of them hypostases and not the other? And if they say: ‘They are distinct’; they have to affirm two distinct eternals,

<sup>60</sup> This is presumably because if there is only one Divinity and there are four entities entailed in this claim, then three of them cannot be divine.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s point here shows both the readiness with which Christians and Muslims equated the Christian and Muslim versions of the Godhead, and also the problems this involved for the Christian doctrine. The hypostases cease to have the ontological reality that is defined by the Christians, and become the less distinct attributes of Kullābī/Ash‘arī doctrine.

لزمهم إثبات قديمين مختلفين جوهر أحدهما مخالف لجوهر الآخر، وهذا يضارع قول الثنوية. وإن هم قالوا في الأقانيم إنها ليست بجواهر، تركوا قولهم إن كل واحد من الأقانيم جوهر واحد.

24. فإن قال قائل منهم: "إن الابن هو الكلمة والنطق في الحقيقة وليس هو العلم"، فما قدمناه يُبطل بما يثبت من أن المتكلم إنما يصير متكلمًا بأن يفعل الكلام، وأن الكلام لا يكون فعلاً إلا للمتكلم، وذلك يحيل كونه متكلمًا لم يزل ووالدًا وأبًا، ويوجب أن الكلام حادث. وما تبين به من أن الكلام لا يكون كلامًا إلا بأن يحدث على ضرب من الترتيب، ويكون من هذا الجنس المعقول الذي لا ينفك مما يقتضى حدوثه، يوجب فساد هذا القول. ومتى أثبتوا كلامًا على خلاف هذا الوجه، لزمهم كل جهالة.

وعلى هذا الوجه ألزمهم شيوخنا القول بأن لكلامه كلامًا، وأن الكلام أب، وأن الكلام الذي أثبتوه هو حياة وعلم وحركة وسكون، وهو الفاعل الخالق.

وبعد، فإذا كانت الكلمة لا تنفك من المتكلم عندهم، فلم صارت بأن تكون ابنًا أولى من أن تكون أبًا؟ وإنما صار الأب فيما بيننا بكونه أبًا أولى، لأنه الأصل للابن ومنه كان الابن ولولاه لم يكن؛ وعندهم أن الأب لا يتقدم الابن، فلم صار بكونه أبًا أولى من الابن؟

25. فإن قال منهم قائل: "إنما قلنا بالأقانيم الثلاثة وإنه جوهر واحد لأن الأشياء لا تخلو من جوهر وعرض، والعرض لا يصح منه الفعل، فيجب كون الإله جوهرًا. والجوهر على ضربين: جسم وما ليس بجسم، فالجسم يحتل التركيب والتجزئة، فيجب أن يكون الإله ليس بجسم. ولا يخلو من كونه حيًا أو ليس بحي، والموات لا يكون منه اختيار ولا تمييز ولا فعل، وأثبتناه حيًا، والحي ينقسم إلى ناطق وإلى ما ليس بناطق. فما ليس

with the substance of one of them being different from the substance of the other. This is similar to the teaching of the dualists. And if they say that the hypostases are not substances, they abandon their teaching that each one of the hypostases is one substance.

24. If someone among them should say: ‘The Son is the Word and Speech in reality, and he is not Knowledge’; what we have said earlier refutes this,<sup>62</sup> and it is refuted by what is affirmed that the speaker only becomes speaker when he performs the word, and the word is only the action of the speaker. And this prevents him being eternally speaking, generating and Father, and it necessitates the Word being temporal. And the fact that it can be demonstrated that a word is only a word by being produced in the form of sequence, and is of the kind that is known as always having to be regarded as temporal, emphatically shows the error of this teaching. And as long as they affirm a word in contradiction to this principle, they are open to every foolishness.

In this respect our masters compelled them to accept the teaching that his Word has a word, that the Word is a father, that the Word which they affirm is life, knowledge, movement and rest, and is the Agent and Creator.

Furthermore, if the Word is not detached from the Speaker in their view, then why should it be Son rather than being Father? According to what we have shown, he only became Father by his being Father first because he is the origin of the Son and the Son came from him, and without him he would not have been. In their view, the Father is not prior to the Son, so why did he become Father rather than the Son?

25. If one of them should say: ‘We only teach the three hypostases and that he is one substance because things can only be substance or accident. And an accident cannot give rise to an action, so the being of the Divinity must be substance. Substance is of two kinds: body and what is not body. Body is susceptible to composition and partition, so the Divinity cannot be a body. He can only be living or not living, and choice, discernment and action do not arise from lifeless things, so we assert that he is living. And the living are divided into articulate and what is not articulate. And what is not articulate is not characterised

---

<sup>62</sup> This is presumably in the discussion of God’s attributes in one of the lost earlier parts of the *Mughnī*.

بناطق لا يكون موصوفاً بتمييز ولا حكمة، فيجب كونه ناطقاً، فنثبت كونه جوهرًا حيًا ناطقاً. ولا يخلو عند ذلك من أن يكون حيًا ناطقاً لأنّه جوهر وبحياة ونطق.“ وإن كان كذلك لأنّه جوهر، وجب كون كلّ جوهر ناطقاً حيًا، فنثبت أنّه ناطق حيّ بحياة ونطق، ويجب كونها من نفس الجوهر لأنّها ليسا بحادثين فيه لأنّه قديم غير محدث، قالوا: ”فيجب أن يكون الجوهر هو الأب، والحياة هي الروح، والنطق هو الكلمة وهو الابن.“

26. وربّما زادوا بأن قالوا: والحيّ على ضربين: ضرب يمكنه الولاد،<sup>1</sup> وآخر لا يمكنه ذلك، فيكون منقوصاً، فوجب أن يكون الإله يمكن فيه الولاد،<sup>2</sup> وذلك يوجب كونه أباً. فلذلك قلنا: أب وابن وروح القدس، وجعلنا الروح هي الحياة والابن هو النطق والكلمة، قيل له: إنّ الذي ذكرتموه من الاعتبار إنّما كان يجب لو لم يصحّ إثبات معلوم سوى الجوهر والعرض. فأما وقد بينّا أنّ القديم ليس بجوهر ولا عرض، فقد بطل أصل ما بنيتم عليه هذا السؤال. وقولكم إنّ الجوهر جسم وما ليس بجسم فيجب أن يكون الإله ليس بجسم، لأنّه لا يحتمل التركيب، يوجب عليكم القول بجواز كونه غير جوهر ولا عرض، لأنّه إذا جاز لكم إثباته فاعلا مختاراً وإن لم يكن جسمًا، بخلاف الشاهد، ليجوزنّ إثباته ليس بجوهر ولا عرض بخلاف الشاهد. وقوله: ”إنّه يجب كونه ناطقاً وحيًا، لأنّه متى أثبت بخلاف ذلك كان منقوصاً“، يوجب عليهم كونه موجوداً قديماً قادراً سميعاً بصيراً مدركاً. وذلك يوجب، إذا لم يصحّ كونه كذلك لجوهريته، أن يكون لمعاني؛ وفي هذا

<sup>1</sup>خ: الولادة. <sup>2</sup>خ: الولادة.

by discernment or judgement, so he must be articulate. Thus we assert that he is living, substance and articulate. In this way he has to be living and articulate because he is substance with life and speech.<sup>63</sup> Now, if it is thus because he is substance, every substance must be articulate and living. And it is proved that he is rational and living by Life and Speech, though they must be the substance itself since they are not things that come into being in him because he is eternal and not temporal. They say: ‘So the substance must be the Father, Life is the Spirit, and Speech is the Word which is the Son.’

26. They may go further and say: ‘Living things are of two kinds: a kind from which generation is possible, and another from which this is not possible so that it is deficient. Thus, generation must be possible in the Divinity, and this necessitates him being Father. Thus, in this way we say: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and we make the Spirit the Life, and the Son the Speech and Word.’<sup>64</sup> Say to him: What you have spoken about is a mode of expression that would only be compelling if no known things other than substance and accident could be affirmed. Indeed, we have demonstrated that the eternal One is not substance or accident, so the principle on which you construct this matter has been proved false. And your statement that substance is body and what is not body, and so the Divinity cannot be body because he is not susceptible to composition, imposes upon you teaching that requires him not to be substance or accident. For if it is justifiable for you to affirm that he is Agent and one who chooses and he is not a body, unlike in the visible world, then it can justifiably be affirmed that he is not substance or accident, unlike in the visible world.

His statement, ‘He must be articulate and living, because if he is affirmed to be different from this he will be deficient,’<sup>65</sup> requires them to accept that he is existing, eternal, powerful, hearing, seeing and perceiving. And if it is not right that he is like this through his substantiality, then it necessarily follows that it is because of attributes. In this is the

<sup>63</sup> This resembles the third Christian explanation for calling God substance given by al-Baḡillānī, above pp. 146–147, §1.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. al-Nāshī’ al-Akbar, above p. 72–73, §35, and more closely Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 132–133, and p. 204, n. 49. The introductory phrase, *wa rubbamā zādū bi-an qālū*, suggests that ‘Abd al-Jabbār is maybe taking this from an intermediary source rather than directly from Christians.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 130–131.

إثبات أقانيم كثيرة لمثل ما له أثبتوا حياةً ونطقاً. وقوله: ”إنَّ الحياة والنطق يجب كونهما من نفس الجوهر“، يستحيل، لأنَّ ما هو من نفس الجوهر لا يصحَّ أن يوجب له حكماً، وإنَّما يصحَّ ذلك فيما خالفه. ولذلك لا يجوز كون الواحد منا حياً ببعضه لما كان بعضه من جوهره. ويجب على علَّتهم أن يثبت فيما لم يزل جواداً محسناً، لأنَّ من لم يكن كذلك كان بخيلاً منقوصاً، وإلاَّ فإنَّ صحَّ إثباته لا على هاتين الصفتين صحَّ إثباته حياً غير ناطق ويكون ناطقاً من بعد وفعلاً للكلام عند حاجة العباد إليه.

27. على أنَّ الجوهر، إن كان موصوفاً بالحياة والنطق لأنَّه جوهر، وجب أن يكون كلَّ جوهر كذلك على ما اعتمدوا عليه. وإن كان لخاصَّته، فقد بطل اعتلاهم ولزمهم أن تكون الحياة والنطق إنَّما صاراً خاصَّتين لخاصَّته الثالثة لأنَّهما إن صاراً خاصَّتين لا لخاصَّته الثالثة لأنَّهما خاصَّتان، لزم ذلك في كلَّ خاصَّته. وهذا يوجب ما لا نهاية له من الخواصَّ.

ويجب على ما اعتلوا به أن يكون متحرِّكاً وذا أبعاد وجسمًا، لأنَّ الجوهر إذا لم يكن كذلك كان إلى النقص أقرب، بل يجب أن يثبتوا صحَّة ذلك فيه، لأنَّ ما لا يمكن ذلك فيه لا يكون جوهرًا. ويجب أن يثبتوه جوهرًا أكلاً شاربًا، لأنَّ كلَّ حيٍّ لا يصحَّ ذلك فيه كان منقوصاً.



affirmation of many hypostases similarly to the Life and Reason they attribute to him.

His statement ‘Life and Reason must be from the substance itself’ is impossible, because it is incorrect to impose a status upon what is of the substance itself, because this is only correct for what is different from it. In the same way, one of us cannot justifiably be living by a part of himself, when part of himself is of his substance.<sup>66</sup> According to their reason, he must be affirmed as generous and beneficent in eternity, because one who is not such will be miserly and deficient. Alternatively, if he may be affirmed not according to these two attributes, he may be affirmed as living and not articulate, and articulate later and a Maker of words according to the need of humans for this.<sup>67</sup>

27. But if the substance is characterised by Life and Speech because it is substance, then every substance must be like this according to the basis they use. But if it is because of a particularity belonging to it, their pretext is disproved and they must accept that Life and Speech are only particularities because of a third particularity. For if they are particularities because they are particularities not because of a third particularity, then this follows for every particularity. And this entails particularities without limit.<sup>68</sup>

According to the pretext they offer, he must be moving, a possessor of parts, and a body, because if a substance is not like this it must be nearer to deficiency. So they have to affirm that this is right with regard to him, because that in which this is not possible is not a substance. And they must affirm that he is a substance that eats and drinks, because every living thing for which this is not right will be deficient.

---

<sup>66</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s reasoning here appears to be that the hypostases of Life and Reason cannot qualify the substance by making it living and reasonable if they are identical with it, but only if they are attributes which can formally be distinguished from it. The consequence is that this Melkite claim (cf. §22) that the hypostases are not distinct from the substance cannot be sustained.

<sup>67</sup> The active attributes of generosity and beneficence imply the existence of an object, and so could not be eternal in *kalām* terms. In the same way, the attribute of speech cannot easily be regarded as eternal because it too implies an addressee. Thus the whole attempt to explain the hypostases as attributes descends into confusion.

<sup>68</sup> If, as the Christians contend, §25, God is substance in the sense of conforming to one of the logical categories of their thinking, then all other substances must have the same two attributes as him, or he must be endowed with them in a unique way by virtue of a special determining factor. This will then be part of the Godhead, and the Trinitarian nature will disappear.

ويجب على علّتهم أن يقولوا إنّه إنّما صار إلهًا لأنّه حيّ ناطق، كما أنّه كان حيًّا ناطقًا لأنّه جوهر. وهذا يوجب القول بأنّ كلّ حيّ ناطق إله، حتى تكون الملائكة والجنّ والإنس آلهة. وقولهم ”إنّ من حقّ الناطق أن يكون عالمًا حكيمًا“ جهالة، لأنّ العالم الحكيم هو الذى يرتب نطقه، وقد ينطق الصبى من غير علم وحكمة. وقولهم ”إن من ليس يمكنه الولاد فهو منقوص عقيم، فيجب إثباته أبا“، يوجب عليهم القول بأنّه متّخذ لصاحبه، لأنّ من لا يمكنه ذلك كان منقوصًا، ويوجب عليهم القول بأنّ الملائكة منقوصة لأنّها لا تنكح ولا تكون والدًا، ومن قولهم إنّها أفضل من الإنس وأعظم منزلة.

28. وقد اعتلّ بعضهم فى أنّه جوهر واحد بأنّه لو كان جوهرين لوجب كونه ممترجًا من جنسين ومختلطًا من جوهرين، وذلك علامة الحدث. واعتلّ فى أنّه ثلاثة فى العدد بأنّ الثلاثة تجمع نوعى العدد اللذين هما الشفع والوتر، وما جمع نوعى العدد كان أكمل ممّا لم يجمعهما لأنّ أحد نوعى العدد مقصّر عن كمال العدد، ووصفه بالتقصير لا يصحّ، فيجب أن يوصف بكمال العدد وهو ما جمع الشفع والوتر. وهذا يوجب عليهم القول بأنّ الأب وحده يجمع نوعى العدد، وكذلك أقنوم الابن والروح. وهذا يوجب أنّ

According to their reason, they have to say that he is only divine because he is living and articulate, just as he is living and articulate because he is substance. This entails the statement that every living and articulate thing is divine, so that angels, the jinn and humans will be divine.

Their statement that the reality of one who articulates is that he is knowing and wise is foolishness, because one who is knowing and wise is one who composes his speech, and a child may speak without knowledge and wisdom.

Their statement, ‘One for whom generation is not possible is incomplete and sterile, so he must be affirmed as Father’, requires them to accept the statement that he took a consort,<sup>69</sup> because one for whom this is not possible is incomplete. And it requires them to accept the statement that the angels are incomplete, because they do not marry and are not progenitors. And their statement that these are superior to humans and more powerful has the same status.<sup>70</sup>

28. One of them has argued that he is one substance, because if he were two he would have to be mixed from two species and mingled from two substances, which is a sign of temporality.<sup>71</sup>

He has argued that he is three in number because the three combines the two kinds of number, which are the even and the odd. And what combines the two kinds of number is more complete than what does not, because either one of the two kinds of number falls short of the completeness of number. To describe him as falling short is not right, so he must be described as complete in number, which is what combines the even and the odd.<sup>72</sup> This requires them to accept the teaching that the Father himself combines the two types of number, and similarly the hypostasis of the Son and the Spirit. And this requires the

<sup>69</sup> Q 72.3.

<sup>70</sup> These further points reflect Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq’s arguments, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 132–147, though the general point appears to have been well-known, because in the slightly later *Tathbū*, pp. 147–148, ‘Abd al-Jabbār comments that a number of earlier scholars made it, including al-Jāhīz, al-Iskāfī and nearer his own time Ibn al-Ikhshīd (d. 326/938). In fact, he says, anyone who spends enough time with Christians will be able to learn it from them.

<sup>71</sup> This anonymous argument employs the Aristotelian definition of substance, and the common philosophical principle that anything that is composite must be the effect of a higher cause, and so not eternal.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Abū ‘Īsā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 146–147.

الأب وحده ثلاثة أقانيم، حتى تكون الأقانيم تسعة، وإلا فيجب، إن لم يجمع نوعى العدد، أن يكون منقوصاً على علّتهم. وهذا يوجب في كلّ واحد من الأقانيم أن يكون منقوصاً، وذلك يوجب أن لا يكون الكلّ إلهاً وأن يكون النقص قد عمها.

وبعد، فإن عندهم أن الإله في جوهريّته ليس بثلاثة وإنما هو ثلاثة في أقنوميّته، فيجب على علّتهم أن يكون منقوصاً في جوهريّته، لأنّه لم يجمع نوعى العدد. على أنّ النقص عندنا بالضدّ مما ذكره، لأنّه يجب لما جمع نوعى العدد أو النوع الذى هو الشفع، لأنّ ثبوت ذلك فيه يوجب حدوثة ويحيل قدمه، وهذا هو النقص لا ما ذهبوا إليه. وما قالوه يوجب عليهم أن كلّ ما كان في اجتماع العددين فيه أكمل، والشفع والوتر فيه أكثر كان أكمل وأفضل، فيجب أن يثبتوا الإله أقانيم كثيرة، ويجب أن يثبتوا بكلّ صفة تكون مدحاً وكمالاً في الشاهد. وهذا يوجب كونه جسماً مركّباً طويلاً عريضاً.

29. على أنّه يقال لهم في قولهم إنّّه يجب أن يكون أباً لكى لا يكون منقوصاً: هلاًّ قلتم إنّّه أب ووالد على جهة التناسل لكى لا يكون منقوصاً؟ لأنّ الذى ينفى النقص هو هذه الأبوة دون ما ذكرتموه ممّا لا يُعقل. وهذا يوجب عليهم كونه جسماً يصحّ منه من اتّخاذ الصاحبة والاستيلاد ما يصحّ من الواحد ممّا. ومن بلغ هذا المبلغ لم نكلّمه في النصرانيّة، وكلّمناه في نفى التشبيه. فإن قالوا: "إنّ تولّد الابن من الأب هو كتولّد الكلمة من العقل وحرّ النار

Father himself to be three hypostases, until the hypostases are nine.<sup>73</sup> Otherwise, if he does not combine the two types of number, he must be incomplete according to their reasoning. And this requires that each one of the hypostases will be incomplete, which requires that none of them will be a Divinity and that deficiency will be common to them.

Furthermore, if in their view the Divinity is not three in his substantiality, but is only three in his hypostaticity, then according to their pretext he must fall short in his substantiality because he does not combine the two types of number. However, in our view falling short is the opposite of what he states, because it must apply to what combines the two types of number or the type that is even, for to affirm this of him requires him to be temporal and prevents his eternity, and this is deficiency, not what they think it is. What they say requires them to accept that everything in which there is combination of the two numbers is more complete, and the greater the even and odd in it the more complete and superior it is. So they must affirm that the Divinity is many hypostases, and they must affirm him by every attribute that is praise and completeness in the known world. And this requires him to be a body, composed, long and broad.

29. However, say to them in their teaching that he must be Father so as not to be incomplete: Why do you not say that he is Father and progenitor in the sense of sexual reproduction so that he should not be incomplete? For what denies deficiency is this fatherhood, and not the irrational kind you mention. And this requires them to accept that he is a body, for whom taking a partner and seeking children are appropriate, as they are appropriate for one of us. And whoever reaches this point, we will not dispute with him about Christianity but dispute with him about denying anthropomorphism.<sup>74</sup>

If they say, ‘The generation of the Son from the Father is like the generation of a word from reason, or a fire’s heat from fire, or the sun’s

<sup>73</sup> Each of the three hypostases will combine odd and even, making nine in all. ‘Abd al-Jabbār continues to follow the outlines of Abū Ṭisā’s argument.

<sup>74</sup> This argument was a favourite of the Melkite theologian Theodore Abū Qurrah; cf. Bacha, *Oeuvres arabes*, pp. 81–82, 97–98, Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, pp. 162–163, 144 respectively (and see further Lamoreaux, pp. 12–13, and p. 12, n. 48). ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to another argument of his in §76. His point here is that this claim is not so much about the pluralistic Godhead of Christianity, as about the likening of God to humans.

من النار وضيء الشمس من الشمس“، قيل لهم: إنّ الكلمة لا تتولّد من العقل، لأنّها قد تحصل من غير العاقل، وقد يحصل العقل فيمن لا يمكنه الكلمة، وإنّما صحّ ترتيبها بالعلم على سبيل الاختيار من الفاعل، لا أنّها تتولّد من العقل. فإن قال: ”أردتُ بالكلمة العلم“، قيل له: إنّ العلم هو نفس العقل، إذا أشير به إلى العلوم الضرورية، وإن أردت العلوم المكتسبة وما يجري مجراها، فذلك ممّا لا يتولّد عن العقل لخلو العاقل منه وصحة ذلك فيه.

على أن ما لأجله يمنعون من كونه أباً على جهة التناسل لما فيه من إيجاب حدّته يوجب المنع من كونه أباً على جهة تولّد الكلمة من العقل، لأن ذلك لا يكون إلا في الأمور المحدثّة. فأمّا تولّد حرّ النار من النار فلا يصحّ، لأنّ حرّ النار، لو تولّد من جوهره، لوجب في كلّ جوهر أن يكون بمنزلة النار في الحرارة. فإن قال قائل: ”يتولّد لا من جوهره لكن من كونه ناراً“، قيل له: كأنك قلت إنّ الحرّ يتولّد من الحرّ والجوهر أو الحرّ وحده، وهذا يوجب كون الشيء متولّداً من نفسه. فإن قالوا: ”عنينا بذلك أن كونه ناراً لا يعقل إلاّ وله حرّ، وكذلك القول في تولّد الابن من الأب“، قيل لهم: فيجب أن تثبتوه أولاً أباً ثم تثبتوا له ابناً يتولّد عنه. على أن إثباته ناراً هو إثبات الحرارة فيه لا أنّا نقول إنّ الحرارة تتولّد عنه. فيجب أن تثبتوا أباً و ابناً معاً على أنّهما أصلاً، وذلك يغنيهم عن ذكر التولد.

radiance from the sun’;<sup>75</sup> say to them: A word is not generated from reason, because it may come from someone who is not reasonable, and reason may be found in someone who is not capable of words. And in fact its sequence is rightly through knowledge by way of choice on the part of the one performing it, not being generated from reason. And if he says: ‘By word I mean knowledge’, say to him: Knowledge is reason itself, if I refer to things that are necessarily known through it. And if I mean things that are known by acquisition and their equivalent, such kinds of things are not generated from reason, because the rational person does not possess them, and quite appropriately so.

However, their reason for disallowing his being Father in the sense of sexual reproduction because he would have to be temporal necessarily prevents him from being Father in the sense of the word being generated from reason, because this only happens in temporal circumstances.

As for the generation of the fire’s heat from the fire, this is not correct, because if the fire’s heat is generated from its substance, then it follows that every substance will have the same status as fire in warmth. If someone should say, ‘It is not generated from the substance but from its being fire’; say to him: It is as though you have said that the heat is generated from the heat and the substance or the heat alone, and this entails the thing being generated from itself.<sup>76</sup> And if they say, ‘We mean by this that its being fire can only be understood when it has heat, and it is the same with the teaching about the generation of the Son from the Father’; say to them, So you have first to affirm him as Father and then to affirm his Son generated from him. But to affirm it as fire is to affirm warmth in it; we do not say that warmth is generated from it. So you must affirm Father and Son together as though they were both principles. And this removes their reason for referring to generation.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. §3 above. These comparisons are an ancient part of the Christian apologetic tradition. While ‘Abd al-Jabbār undoubtedly takes the analogies from Abū ‘Isā, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 68–69, he does not borrow the earlier scholar’s arguments, pp. 164–171, §§134–140, presumably because he found them inadequate.

<sup>76</sup> The point here appears to be that if it is the actual substance of the fire that gives off warmth, rather than attributes that are superadded to it, then every other substance must give off warmth, which is palpably absurd. The alternative is that the heat is generated by the attributes that make the fire fire, i.e. its heat, in which case the heat is generated by the heat, which is equally absurd.

30. والقول في تولّد الضوء من الشمس كالقول فيما ذكرناه، على أنّ الضوء أجسام والجسم لا يتولّد من جسم، وإنّما وجب أن يكون له ضوء لصقالته واختصاصه بما هو عليه من الضياء، لأنّ من حقّ الجسم، إذا كان هذه صفته، أن يكون له ضوء لا أن هناك شيئاً يتولّد عن غيره. ولا فرق والحال هذه بين أن يقال إنّ الشمس يتولّد عن ضيائه وبين من قال إنّ ضيائه يتولّد عنه. وقد اعتمد بعضهم في تمثيل قوله بالتثليث بالشمس والضوء وأنّهما شخصان يجمعهما جوهر واحد يتّفقان في الجوهرية ويختلفان في الشخصية، وكذلك القديم الذي هو أقانيم ثلاثة تتّفق في الجوهرية وتختلف في الأقنومية والشخصية. وهذا بعيد، لأنّ ضياء الشمس غير الشمس وصفته تخالف صفته وبعضه غير بعض، وذلك لا يصحّ عندهم في الأقانيم. وقد قال بعضهم: "إذا كان الإنسان حيّاً ناطقاً مائتاً وهو إنسان واحد، فكذلك الإله موجود حيّ ناطق وهو جوهر واحد؛ وهذا غلط، لأنّ الإنسان لم يكن إنساناً لأنّه حيّ ناطق مائت، وإنّما صار إنساناً لما بانّ منه من سائر الحيوان من البنية. ولو كان إنساناً لما ذكره لم يخرج من أن يكون الذي صحّ فيه ما قاله البنية وأن لا يرجع بهذه الصفة إلى شيء واحد في الحقيقة، بل يرجع إلى أشياء مبنية كلّ جزء منا ليس بإنسان البتّة. وهذا يوجب عليهم أن كلّ واحد من الأقانيم ليس بجوهر، وعندهم أنّه جوهر خاصّ، وإن كانت البنية جوهرّاً عامّاً.



30. The teaching about the generation of the sun’s radiance from the sun is like the teaching concerning what we have referred to, although radiance is bodies,<sup>77</sup> and a body is not generated from a body, but rather it must have radiance because of its smoothness and the brightness that is a particular feature of it. For the reality of the body is that it possesses radiance, if this is its attribute, not that there is something there that is generated from something other than it. This being the situation, there is no difference between saying that the sun is generated from its brightness and the person who says that its brightness is generated from it.

One of them has built up a comparison between his teaching about the Trinity and the sun and its beams, that the two of them are individuals which are combined together by one substance, and are uniform in being substance and differentiated in being individuals. The eternal One is like this: he is three hypostases uniform in substantiality and differentiated in being hypostaticity and individuality. But this is improbable, because the sun’s radiance is other than the sun, and the attribute of one is distinguished from the attribute of the other, and the one’s part is other than the other’s part. But in their view this is not right with regard to the hypostases.<sup>78</sup>

One of them has said, ‘If the human is living, speaking and mortal and is one human, then the Divinity is likewise existing, living and articulate and is one substance.’ This is an error, because the human is not a human because he is living, speaking and mortal, but is a human because of the assemblage that separates him from other animals. If he were a human because of what he states, he could only be the being about whom is attested the assemblage he has spoken about, and he would not be able to derive this attribute from one thing in reality but he would derive from things assembled, each part of which would not in any respect be a human. This would necessitate them accepting that each of the hypostases was not substance, though in their view it is specific substance, although the assemblage is general substance.

---

<sup>77</sup> These are composite physical particles of which the perceptible world is constituted.

<sup>78</sup> According to strict *kalām* logic, the sun and its radiance are two separate entities with distinct characteristics, and therefore the comparison, which in every other respect is more than apt, cannot apply.

على أن ما قالوه يؤكد قولنا، لأننا نجعل لكلّ جزء من الإنسان من الحكم ما نجعله للآخر، فيجب أن يجعلوا لكلّ واحد من الأقانيم من الحكم والصفة ما للآخر. وفي هذا نقض جميع ما يعتمدون عليه. وإنّما صحّ كون الأجزاء الكثيرة إنساناً واحداً وحيّاً، لأنّه يحيا بحياة تحلّه، ومن حقها أن لا توجب الحكم له إلا بحصول أجزاء كثيرة منها في أجزاء كثيرة من الجواهر مبنية. والقديم تعالى لا يصحّ أن يكون إنّما صار حياً لكونه مع غيره مبنياً بنية مخصوصة، لأنّ ذلك يوجب كونه جسماً محدثاً.

31. ويقال لهم: لم صرتم بأن تقولوا إنّ الله جوهر واحد ثلاثة أقانيم بأولى من أن يقال هو جواهر ثلاثة أقنوم واحد؟ فإن قالوا: "لأنّها مختلفة في باب الأقانيم متّفقة في الجوهرية"، قيل لهم: هلاًّ قلتم إنّها مختلفة في باب الجوهرية متّفقة في أنّها أقانيم؟ فأما من يقول منهم: "إنّى أريد بقولي 'جوهر واحد' أنّه موصوف واحد، وبقولي 'أقانيم ثلاثة' أنّه يختصّ بكونه قديماً حياً متكّلاً، ولا أريد بهذه العبارات إلّا ما ذكرته"، فقله في المعنى يخالف مذهب النصارى، لأنّ من مذهبها ما قدمناه من إثبات ثلاثة أقانيم جوهرًا واحداً في الحقيقة. يبيّن ذلك أن من مذهب النصارى القول بأن الابن يتّحد بعيسى، ويخصّون الابن بالاتّحاد. فلو كان القديم شيئاً واحداً في الحقيقة، لم يصحّ لهم القول بأنّ ما يتّحد ليس هو الذي يتّحد. ومن قولهم: إن الاتّحاد يصير المسيح من جوهرين، لاهوت وناسوت، أو يصير واحداً بعد أن كان كلّ واحد منه جوهرًا.

فكلّ ذلك يبيّن أنّ ما قاله يبعد من قول النصارى، وإن كان قد حكينا ذلك عن بعض المتقدّمين منهم. ولا يخرج من أن يكون هذا القول مخطئاً

However, what they say confirms our teaching, because we regard each part of the human as having the same status as another. So they would have to regard each of the hypostases as having the same status and attribute as another. And in this is the invalidation of all they rely upon. And indeed, it is right that the many parts are one living human, because he lives by life that inheres within him, and the truth of it<sup>79</sup> is that it only allows the status to him by the incidence of many parts of it in many parts of the constituted substance. But it is inappropriate for the almighty eternal One to be living only by being assembled together with what is other than him into a particular assemblage. For this would entail his being a temporal body.

31. Say to them: Why did you start saying that God is one substance and three hypostases, rather than it being said that he is three substances and one hypostasis? If they say, ‘Because they are distinguished as regards hypostases and uniform in hypostaticity’, say to them, Why do you not say that they are distinguished as regards substantiality and uniform in being hypostases?

As for the person among them who says, ‘I mean by saying “one substance” that he is one described being, and by saying “three hypostases” that he is particularised by his being eternal, living and speaking. I mean no more by this expression than I have said’; his words differ from the belief of the Christians in import because, as we have said above, their belief includes the affirmation of three hypostases as one substance in reality. This shows clearly that part of the belief of the Christians is the teaching that the Son united with Jesus, and they particularise the Son by uniting. So if the eternal One were one thing in reality, the teaching that the One who did not unite was not the One who did unite could not be right for them. In their teaching is that the Uniting made Christ from two substances, divine nature and human nature, or made one after each of him had been a substance.

All this makes clear that what he says is remote from the teachings of the Christians, even though we have related this from one of the

---

<sup>79</sup> This is the attribute of life, which allows the human to be living by inhering in his various parts.

من وجهين: أحدهما إجراؤه هذه الأسماء عليه في اللغة العربية، وذلك قبيح من جهة الشريعة؛ والثاني أنه اقتصر بصفاته، جلّ وعزّ، على أنه قديم حيّ متكلم، وهذا يوجب نفى كونه قادراً، مدركاً، مريداً، سميعاً، بصيراً؛ وهذا كفر من قائله.

32. فأمّا من قال منهم: "إنّه أب المسيح بمعنى التبنّى والكرامة"، فهذا أولاً يبطل قولهم إنّّه فيما لم يزل أباً، ويوجب كونه أباً في حال خلقه لعيسى. على أنّ معنى التبنّى لا يصحّ إلاّ في من يصحّ أن يكون له في الحقيقة ولد، أو فيما يصحّ أن يولد مثله لثله وفيما كان من جنسه من الحيوان؛ ولذلك لا يصحّ من الميت أن يتبنّى الحيّ لما لم يصحّ أن يكون له وهو ميت ابناً في الحقيقة. ولا

first leaders among them.<sup>80</sup> He does not escape from being mistaken in this statement in two respects. One of them is his employing these terms about him in the Arabic language; it is repugnant in terms of the religious law.<sup>81</sup> And the second is that he restricts his attributes, great and mighty, to being eternal, living and speaking, which entails the denial of his being powerful, perceptive, willing, hearing and seeing. This is unbelief from the one who says it.

32. As for what someone from them says,<sup>82</sup> ‘He is the Father of Christ in the sense of adoption and esteem’,<sup>83</sup> in the first place this disproves their teaching that he is Father in eternity, and entails his being Father at the point of his creating Jesus. However, the meaning of ‘adoption’ is only proper for someone who could properly have a son in reality, or where like can properly generate like, and where an animal is of its kind. Thus, a being who is dead cannot properly adopt the living, because he cannot properly be a son to him in reality when he is dead.

<sup>80</sup> Could this have been the early third/ninth century Nestorian ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī? He certainly employed Islamic attributes doctrine to explain the Trinity, arguing that if God is God he must possess the two attributes of Life and Knowledge, which are uniquely part of his own constitution and from which other attributes are derived; Hayek, *‘Ammār al-Baṣrī*, particularly pp. 48.18–49.2. He was almost certainly known to the Mu‘tazilī Abū al-Hudhayl, who wrote a refutation entitled *K. ‘alā ‘Ammār al-Naṣrānī fī al-radd ‘alā al-Naṣrānā*; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 204.

‘Abd al-Jabbār’s point in his reply is that according to this model God would be one being endowed with attributes, rather than the three entities that are one substance. It must follow that this one being would both unite with the human Jesus in the Incarnation and not do this. Since ‘Abd al-Jabbār has already engaged with similar Christian presentations of the Trinity in terms of attributes without making this fundamental criticism, it is likely that here he is drawing upon a separate source in which this argument appears, maybe even Abū al-Hudhayl’s refutation.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s objection is that since the teachings of Islam insist upon the strict oneness of God, this attempt to characterise him as three real entities is a violation. He recognises that behind the explanation in terms of attributes lurks the Christian teaching that the hypostases each have reality.

<sup>82</sup> The following sections, §§32–34, are translated and commented on by M. Heemskerck, ‘A Mu‘tazilite Refutation of Christianity and Judaism: Two Fragments from ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-l-‘adl*’, in B. Roggema *et al.*, eds, *The Three Rings, Textual Studies in the Historical Dialogue of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Leuven, 2005, pp. 193–196.

<sup>83</sup> This is the argument put forward by the anonymous Christians referred to by al-Jāhīz, *Radd*, p. 25.2–5. At this point ‘Abd al-Jabbār offers his own counter argument, before beginning on a longer account of Mu‘tazilī predecessors’ reactions. The fact that Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbāṭī, as well as al-Māturīdī in all likelihood (see pp. 108–111 above, §8) and earlier Muslims responded to it shows how acute and irritating it may have been.

يصحّ أن يتبنّى الشاب شيخاً كبيراً ولا أن يتبنّى عجلاً وفصيلاً. وليس قولنا في زيد أنّه يتبنّى غيره من قولنا إنّ يعظّمه ويكرّمه بسبيل، ولذلك يصحّ من أحدنا أن يعظّم من لا يصحّ أن يتبنّاه، وإنّما يراد بذلك أنّه يجريه مجرى ابنه في التربية والاختصاص والأحكام المتعلقة بالابن والأب. وذلك يستحيل في القديم تعالى، فكيف يقال إنّ تبناه؟

على أنّ هذا القول يوجب في كلّ واحد من الأنبياء أنّه ابنه على جهة التبنّى وأن لا يكون لعيسى في ذلك من الاختصاص ما ليس لغيره. على أنّ الإنسان قد يؤاخى غيره كما يتبنّى غيره على جهة الإكرام والتشبيه بالأخوة في الحقيقة، فلا فرق بين من قال: "إنّه سبحانه يتبنّى على هذا المعنى"، وبين من قال: "إنّه يؤاخى غيره". فإذا فسد ذلك، ثبت أن قولهم بإنّه، جلّ وعزّ، أب وله ابن على هذا الوجه لا يصحّ.

33. وأمّا من قال: "إذا صحّ أن يكون إبراهيم خليلاً، فهلاًّ صحّ كون عيسى ابناً له، لا على حقيقة البنوة لكن بمعنى الكرامة؟" فقد قال شيخنا أبوعلی، رحمه الله: إنّ الخليل في الحقيقة يصحّ في إبراهيم معه تعالى، لأنّ الخلّة مأخوذة من الاصطفاء والاختصاص، وإنّما يقال في الإنسان إنّ خليل لغيره إذا اختصّه من الأمور بما لم يختصّ به غيره، فلمّا خصّ، جلّ وعزّ، إبراهيم، عليه السلام، من وحيه وكرامته بما لم يختصّ به غيره في زمنه، جاز أن يقال إنّ خليل الله، فسمّى نفسه خليلاً لله.

وهذا القياس يقتضى أن يوصف كلّ أحد من الأنبياء بأنّه خليل له، لأنّه قد خصّ كلّ واحد منهم بما بان به من غيره من الوحي والكرامة، فلذلك قال نبينا، صلوات الله عليه: "لو كنت متخذاً خليلاً، لاتخذت أبا بكر خليلاً، لكن صاحبكم خليل الله؟" فسمّى نفسه خليلاً لله، عزّ وجلّ، وامتنع أن

And a young man cannot properly adopt a much older man, or adopt a calf or young camel. And to say that Zayd adopts another person is not to say that he gives him glory or esteem at all. Similarly, one of us may properly give glory to one whom he cannot properly adopt, for by this is only meant that he treats him as his son in upbringing and the privileges and precepts that relate to son and father. This is impossible with respect to the almighty eternal One, so how can it be said that he adopted him?

This statement requires that every one of the prophets should be his son in the sense of adoption, and that Jesus had no privilege in this that any other did not have. But a man may take another as brother just as he may adopt another in the sense of esteeming and resembling real brotherhood. So there is no difference between the one who says, ‘The blessed One adopts’ in this sense, and the one who says, ‘He makes another his brother’.<sup>84</sup> And if this is wrong, it is obvious that their statement that he, great and mighty, is a Father and has a Son in this respect is incorrect.

33. As for the one who says, ‘If it is correct for Abraham to be friend,<sup>85</sup> then why is it not correct for Jesus to be his Son, not in the true sense of sonship but in the sense of honour?’<sup>86</sup> Our master Abū ‘Alī,<sup>87</sup> may God be merciful to him, said, “‘Friend’ in the true sense is correct for Abraham together with the almighty One, because friendship is derived from selecting and distinguishing. For it is only said that a man is a friend of another if he has distinguished him in ways he has not distinguished others. And since he, great and mighty, distinguished Abraham, peace be upon him, by revelation and honour to him with which he did not distinguish others in his time, it can rightly be said that he was friend of God. Indeed, he called him friend of God.’

This analogy means that every single one of the prophets must be described as friend to him, because he distinguished every one of them by revelation and honour that marked him out from others. Thus, our Prophet, God’s blessings be upon him, said, ‘If I were to take a friend, I would take Abū Bakr as friend, but your master is the friend of

<sup>84</sup> The fragrance of the Christians’ claim is emphasised by this second, more obviously impossible statement.

<sup>85</sup> Q 4.125.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Jāhiz, *Radd*, p. 25.2–5.

<sup>87</sup> Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī.

يتخذ أحداً من أمته خليلاً لأنه يعمّمهم بالتبليغ والبيان. فلا يجوز أن يخصّ واحداً منهم بذلك على حسب ما خصّه الله تعالى بما حمّله من الرسالة دون سائر أهل زمانه، إلاّ أنّه خصّ إبراهيم بذلك، وصار له كاللقب. وذلك لا يمتنع في الاسم. ألا ترى أنّ القرآن قد خصّ بهذه التسمية، وإن كان معناها يصحّ في غيره أيضاً، وموسى خصّ بأنّه كليّم الله، وإن كان تعالى قد كلّّم الملائكة.

وهذا أولى من أن تجعل الخليل بمعنى المحبّة أو الحاجة، لأنّ ذلك لا يكاد يطرد فيهما، فهو مجاز من حيث كان المحبّ يخصّ حبيبه بما لا يخصّ به غيره، ومن حيث كان المحتاج يفتقر إلى المحتاج إليه كافتقار الخليل إلى من اتّخذه خليلاً، ولذلك لا يطرد فيهما، فلا يقال في كلّ من أحبه أنّه خليله إذا لم يخصّه من النبوة وغيرها بما لا يخصّ به غيره.

34. فإن قيل: "أفليس الشاعر قد قال:

وإن أتاه خليل يوم مسألة يقول لا غائب مالى ولا حرم،

فوصفه بذلك من الحاجة؟ وقد بيّن أهل اللغة فقالوا إنّ الخليل بمعنى



God’.<sup>88</sup> Thus, he called himself friend of God, great and mighty, and refused to take any of his community as friend because he gave all of them the announcement and communication. So he could not properly have distinguished one of them by this in the way that God the exalted distinguished him by charging him and not the other people of his time with apostleship, although he distinguished Abraham by this and it virtually became his title. This is not impossible for a name. Can you not see that the Qur’ān has been given such a distinct designation,<sup>89</sup> even though the meaning of it is also appropriate for things beside it, and Moses was distinguished as the one to whom God spoke,<sup>90</sup> even though the exalted One had spoken to the angels.

This is preferable to giving ‘friend’ the meaning of ‘love’ or ‘need’, because it is barely consistent with them;<sup>91</sup> such is figurative in that the lover distinguishes his beloved in a way he does not distinguish others, and in that the one in need is dependent on the one he is in need of like the friend is dependent on the one who has taken him as friend. In this way it is not consistent with them, for it cannot be said about anyone whom he<sup>92</sup> loves that he is his friend if he does not distinguish him with prophethood and other things with which he has not distinguished others.

34. If it is said, ‘Has not the poet said:

And if a friend should come to him on a day of demand,  
He will say, What I have is not concealed or debarred,<sup>93</sup>

and in this he characterises it as need? The grammarians have shown that ‘friend’ has the sense of ‘need’ when derived from ‘want’, *khalla*

<sup>88</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 4, ch. 48.

<sup>89</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār presumably has in mind the designation *kitāb Allāh*, by which the Qur’ān is specifically known even though there are other revealed books.

<sup>90</sup> Q 4.164.

<sup>91</sup> As is shown in the ensuing argument, *khalīl* can be derived from *khulla* = *muḥabba*, ‘love’, or from *khalla* = *ḥāja*, ‘necessity’. The former gives some justification to the proposed relationship between God and Jesus because it implies intense closeness between God and Abraham, while the latter suggests greater distance between them. This is al-Jāhiz’s argument, *Radd*, pp. 30.19–31.6, but ‘Abd al-Jabbār evidently thinks that the preceding arguments are stronger.

<sup>92</sup> This must refer to God.

<sup>93</sup> Al-Jāhiz, *Radd*, p. 31.7–8, quotes this from the elegy of the pre-Islamic poet Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā on the tribal chief Harim ibn Sinān (the *Radd* has ‘*ājiz* in the second hemistich, though the edition in C. Landberg, *Primeurs arabes*, Leiden, 1889, p. 139, has *ghā’ib* as here).

الحاجة فمأخوذ من الخلّة بفتح الخاء، وبمعنى المحبة مأخوذ من الخلّة بضم الخاء، فهلا كان حقيقة فيهما؟“ قيل له: إنّنا لم ننكر استعمال ذلك في هذين الأمرين، وإنّا ادّعينا كونه مجازاً، لا لأنّه لو كان حقيقة لقدح فيما نذهب إليه، لأنّه كان يجب أن يكون إبراهيم وصف بأنّه خليل الله، إمّا لأنّه ظهر من حاجته في انقطاعه إلى الله سبحانه في ذلك الزمان ما لم يظهر من غيره، أو لأنّه ظهر له من محبة الله تعالى ما لم يظهر لغيره، أو لأنّه خصّه بما لم يخصّ به غيره، ثم صار الاسم له كالعلم. ولا يصحّ مثل ذلك في البنوة،<sup>1</sup> لأنّ حقيقة الابن أن يكون مولود من الأب كائناً من مائه، وذلك يستحيل على الله تعالى. فيجب أن لا يصحّ أن يوصف عيسى بأنّه ابن الله، من حيث وُصف إبراهيم بأنّه خليل له.

35. وقد أجاب أبو عثمان الجاحظ بأنّ قال: ”إنّ إبراهيم لم يكن خليلاً لخلّة كانت بينه وبين الله، جلّ وعزّ، لأنّ الخلّة والإخاء والصدّاقة منفي عن الله، وإنّا كان خليلاً بالخلّة التي أدخلها على نفسه وماله، لأنّه اختلّ في الله اختلاّ لم يختلّه أحد قبله بقذفهم إياه في النار، وذبحه ابنه، وحمله على ماله بالمواساة وبما فعله قومه، والبراءة من أبويه في الحياة والممات، وترك وطنه والهجرة إلى غير داره ومسقط رأسه، فصار بهذه الشدائد مختلاً في الله وخليلاً. فأضافه الله إلى نفسه وسمّاه خليله من بين الأنبياء، كما تُسمّى الكعبة بيت الله من بين البيوت، وأهل مكّة أهل الله من بين جميع البلدان، وناقّة صالح ناقّة الله، وهكذا كلّ شيء عظمه الله من خير أو شر أو ثواب

<sup>1</sup>ط: البنوة.

with an ‘a’ on *khā*, and has the sense of ‘friendship’ when derived from ‘amity’, *khulla* with a ‘u’ on *khā*, so which of these is right?<sup>94</sup> Say to him, We do not deny this usage in these two instances, but we only maintain that it is figurative. This is not because if it were literal it would detract from what we think about it, because Abraham should be described as friend of God, whether because his need was apparent in his devotion to God the blessed as was not made apparent from others of that time, or because the love of God almighty was made apparent to him as it was not made apparent to others, or because he favoured him in ways he did not favour others, and so the name became for him like a token. Such is not right in the case of sonship, because the reality of a son is that he is generated from a father, existing from his fluid, and this is impossible for God almighty. So it follows that Jesus cannot properly be described as Son of God, in the way that Abraham has been described as friend of God.

35. Abū ‘Uthmān al-Jāhīz replied by saying,<sup>95</sup> ‘Abraham was not friend because of the amity that existed between him and God, great and mighty, since amity, brotherliness and friendship are ruled out with God. Rather, he was “friend” because of the need he and those with him underwent. For he completely cast his lot upon God in a way that none before him had done, when they threw him in the fire,<sup>96</sup> when he sacrificed his son,<sup>97</sup> the comfort he gave to those with him after what his people did,<sup>98</sup> leaving his parents in life and death and abandoning his homeland, his migration away from home and the place of his birth,<sup>99</sup> through his hardships he became reliant on God and “friend”. So God took him to himself and named him his “friend” among the prophets, as the Ka’ba is named “House of God” among the houses, and the people of Mecca are named “the people of God” among all the lands, Ṣāliḥ’s she-camel the she-camel of God,<sup>100</sup> and similarly every good or

<sup>94</sup> This originates with al-Jāhīz, *Radd*, pp. 30.19–31.6, though it appears that someone nearer ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s time may have made use of it.

<sup>95</sup> Al-Jāhīz, *Radd*, pp. 30.20–32.8, with some rearrangements, and omissions at pp. 31.6–14, 31.21–32.3.

<sup>96</sup> Q 21.68, 37.97.

<sup>97</sup> Q 37.102–107.

<sup>98</sup> This may be a reference to Abraham’s praying for his father even after he had mistreated him, in e.g. Q 19.47, or to his prayer for his children, in e.g. Q 2.124, 14.37.

<sup>99</sup> Q 21.71, 29.26.

<sup>100</sup> Q 7.73.

وعقاب، كما قالوا: 'دَعَهُ فِي لعنة الله وفي ناره'، وكما قال: 'القرآن كتاب الله'، و'المحرّم شهر الله'، وكما قيل لحمزة 'أسد الله'، ولخالد 'سيف الله'. ولذلك قيل في عيسى روح الله لأنّه خلق في نطف الرجال الأرواح إذا قذفوها في أرحام النساء، على ما أجرى عليه العادة، وخلق في رحم مريم روحاً وجسداً على غير مجرى العادة، فلهذه الخاصية قيل روح الله.

وذلك لا يصحّ في النبوة، لأنّ المعلوم من حال الواحد منّا أنّه "لو رحم جرو كلب فربّاه، لم يجوز أن يسمّيه ولداً ولا ينسبه له أباً، ولو التقط صبيّاً فربّاه لجاز أن يسمّيه ولداً، لأنّه شبيه ابنه، وقد يولد لمثله مثله". فإذا لم يصحّ ممّن هو جسم مثله، إذا لم يكن مشبهاً لابن، لو كان له ابن، فبأن لا يصحّ أن يقال ذلك في الله أوّلئ.

36. فإن قيل: "فهلاًّ جاز أن يقال في عيسى إنّ ابن الله، لأنّه خصّه بأن خلقه من غير ذكر؟" قيل له: هذا يوجب مثله في آدم لأنّه خلقه من غير ذكر ولا أنثى. فإن قالوا: "قد خصّ عيسى في التربية بما لم يخصّ به غيره، فلذلك جاز أن يقال إنّ ابنه؟" فهذا قائم في جميع الأنبياء، عليهم السلام، أنّهم أجمع ربّاهم الله بمعنى أنّه رزقهم وغذاهم وأطعمهم، لأنّ معنى تولّى

bad thing, merit or punishment that God has made important. As they say, “Put him under the curse and punishment of God”, and as one says, “The Qur’ān is the Book of God and Muḥarrām is the month of God”, and as is said about Ḥamza, “the lion of God”,<sup>101</sup> and about Khālīd, “the sword of God”.<sup>102</sup> Likewise, it is said of Jesus, “the spirit of God”; for he<sup>103</sup> creates spirits in the sperm of men when they ejaculate it into women’s wombs following the norm that he observes in this, but he created a spirit and body in Mary’s womb in contravention of the norm observed, and because of this trait he is spoken of as “the spirit of God”.<sup>104</sup>

This is not correct with regard to sonship, because what is accepted in the case of one of us is that ‘if he takes compassion on a puppy and rears it, it is inconceivable for him to call it son or be related to it as father. And if he should come across a boy and rear him, he could conceivably call him son because he would resemble his child and he could have begotten a comparable being.’<sup>105</sup> So if it is not right for a being whose body is like his to be his son because he would not resemble a son, then it is therefore all the less appropriate for it to be said about God.

36. If it is said, ‘Why is it not possible to say that Jesus is Son of God because of his specific way of creating him without a male?’, say to this, This would entail the same about Adam, because he specifically created him without a male or female.<sup>106</sup> And if they say, ‘He gave Jesus a special upbringing that he did not give to others, and for this reason it is possible to say that he is his Son’, this applies to all the prophets, peace be upon them.<sup>107</sup> God brought them all up in the sense that he nurtured them, nourished them and fed them, because the

<sup>101</sup> Ḥamza ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet’s uncle who was killed at the battle of Uhūd.

<sup>102</sup> Khālīd ibn al-Walīd, a fierce opponent of Islam who was converted to Islam late in the Prophet’s lifetime and went on to command Muslim forces under Abū Bakr.

<sup>103</sup> God.

<sup>104</sup> Q 4.171.

<sup>105</sup> Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, p. 30.4–6.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Q 3.59. The comparison between Jesus and Adam was a stock element of Muslim anti-Christian polemic at this time. ‘Abd al-Jabbār may still be following al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, p. 32.19–21.

<sup>107</sup> There is a distant allusion here to the familiar polemical ploy of comparing apparent unique features of Jesus, particularly his miracles, with those of other prophets, on which see Thomas, ‘Miracles of Jesus’. Cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, p. 32.21–33.1.

الحضانة والإطعام والسقى لا يصحّ على الله تعالى في أحد. ولم يخرج عيسى من أن تكون أمّه ربّته كترية سائر الناس، وكان الأحقّ بذلك آدم، لو صحّ ذلك على الله سبحانه، لأنّه خصّه بأن خلقه في سمائه وأغناه عن تربية أمّه وأسكنه جنّته، فكلّ هذه الأمور في آدم أبدع. فلو صحّ أن يقال في عيسى إنّه ابنه لكان ذلك في آدم أولى. وكلّ ذلك يُبطل ما تعلّقوا به.

وقد بينّ شيوخنا، رحمهم الله، أنّ البنوة في الحقيقة لا تصحّ إلّا في من وُلد منه على الوجه المعقول، وعلى جهة المجاز لا تستعمل إلّا في من يجري مجرى ابنه بأن يكون من الأدميين. وبينّوا أن طريق المجاز لا يصحّ في القديم تعالى، ولو جاز أن يقاس المجاز في الاستعمال لم يكن صحيحاً في هذا الموضع، لأنّ فائدته لا تصحّ في الله تعالى. فكيف وقد علمنا أنّ المجاز لا يُقاس. وبينّوا أن الشاب ممّا لو قال للشيخ المُسنّ: ”بُنَىّ ويا بُنَىّ“، لكان ذلك منكراً، وإن كان من جنسه، لمّا لم يصحّ أن يلد مثله. وبينّوا أن الواحد لا يقول لشيءٍ من البهائم إنّه ابنه ولا للجُمادات، ومخالفة القديم تعالى للأجسام أشدّ من مخالفة أحدنا للبهائم أو الجُماد، لأنّ تلك مخالفة في الذات، وهذه مخالفة في الصفات، فبأن لا يُستعمل فيه ذلك أولى.

37. وأمّا ما يتعلّقون به من أن في الإنجيل، ”أتّى ذاهب إلى أبي“، واعتمادهم على ذلك في أنّه تسمّى ابناً له وتسمّى تعالى أباً، وأنّ المسيح أمر الحواريين أن يقولوا في صلاتهم، ”يا أبانا الذي في السماء، تقدّس اسمك“ وأنّه قال لداود،

meaning of taking charge, bringing up, and giving food and water is not appropriate with regard to God almighty towards anyone. And Jesus could never get away from having his mother as the one who brought him up, in the way that everyone is brought up. The one for whom this would be most apposite is Adam, if it were appropriate for God, may he be blessed, because he favoured him specifically by creating him in his heaven, freeing him from the upbringing of his mother and putting him to dwell in his garden. So all these circumstances are more exceptional in the case of Adam. Thus, if it is correct for Jesus to be called his son, it is more so for Adam. And all this invalidates what they cling to.

Our masters, may God have mercy upon them, demonstrated that sonship in reality is only appropriate for one born of a person in the way that is acknowledged, and in a figurative sense it is only employed about someone who could be like a son to him, coming from human beings. They demonstrated that the figurative mode is not appropriate for God almighty, and if it were permissible to make use of figurative arguments they would never be appropriate in this instance, because their use is not appropriate in the case of God almighty. And surely this is the case, when we know that figurative language cannot be used in argument. They also demonstrated that if a young man from among us were to say to an old man of advanced years, ‘Little boy, my little boy’, this would not be allowed, even though he was from his kind, because he could not have given birth to such a person. And they demonstrated that someone does not say that any animal or inanimate thing is his son. And the difference between the eternal almighty One and physical bodies is more radical than the difference between one of us and an animal or inanimate thing, because that difference is of essence while this is of attributes, and therefore it should all the less be employed in respect to him.

37. As for what they cling to from what is in the Gospel, ‘I am going to my Father’,<sup>108</sup> and their reliance upon this because he is called his Son and the Almighty is called Father, and that Christ ordered the disciples to say in their prayers, ‘Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name’,<sup>109</sup> and that he said to David, ‘A child will be born to you, and he

<sup>108</sup> A part of John 20.17. ‘Abd al-Jabbār is still following al-Jāhīz, *Radd*, p. 25.14.

<sup>109</sup> Matthew 6.9. Cf. al-Jāhīz, *Radd*, p. 25.15.

”سيولد لك غلام يُسمَّى لي ابناً وأسمَّى له أباً“ قالوا: ”فيجب أن يكون ذلك حكماً من الله أمرنا أن نسمِّيه به والله تعالى أن يتعبد بذلك“، إن لم يكن ذلك الاسم شائعاً في اللغة كقولكم في الأسماء الشرعية، فغلط. وذلك أن ما ذكره يجري مجرى أخبار الآحاد في أنا لا نعلم صحته، فلا يجوز أن ندين به ونقطع بصحته.

38. وقد ذكر عن التوراة والإنجيل والزبور أن الله سبحانه قال، ”إسرائيل بكرى هو أوّل من تبنّيته من خلقي“، وذلك يوجب أن يكون يعقوب ابناً لله. ولو جاز ذلك، لجاز أن يكون جدّاً ليوسف، ولو صحّ ذلك لصحّ أن يكون عمّاً وخالاً من جهة المحبة والتعظيم، ولصحّ كونه صاحباً وصديقاً. وهذا باطل، لأنّ ذلك إن اقتضى تشريف عيسى بوصف<sup>1</sup> فيجب أن يقتضى حدوث القديم لوصفه بما يوجب فيه النقص. وكيف يقال إنّه أب المسيح، ولا يصحّ أن يقال إنّه عمّ لأولاد الحواريين أو ابن عمّ، من حيث قال عيسى للحواريين، ”أنتم إخواني“؟ وكيف يصحّ ذلك، وقد أنكر تعالى قول من قال، ”نحن أبناء الله وأحبّاءه“، وأنكر قول العرب حين زعمت في الملائكة أنّها بنات الله، واستعظم ذلك؟ فلو لا أن ذلك يستحيل فيه اسماً ومعنى لم ينكره.

39. فإن قيل: ”إن صحّ ذلك في التوراة أو الإنجيل، هل له مخرج صحيح؟“ قيل له: إنّه لا معرفة لنا بتلك اللغة، فلا يلزمنا تأويل ما فيها، وإنّما يجب أن

<sup>1</sup> م: عيسى فيجب.



will be called my Son and I will be called his Father’,<sup>110</sup> they say, ‘This must be a decree from God which orders us to give him this name, and it is from God almighty that he should be worshipped thus.’ But this name is not common in language, as you can say about names in the religious law, so it is wrong. This is because what they refer to is equivalent to a report from a single person whose truthfulness we do not know, so it is not possible for us to have faith in it or say with certainty that it is true.

38. It has been stated from the Torah, Gospel and Psalms that God, may he be blessed, said, ‘Israel is my first born, he is the first of my creation whom I have taken as son’,<sup>111</sup> and this requires that Jacob must be son of God. But if this were possible,<sup>112</sup> then it would be possible for him to be Joseph’s grandfather, and if this were right then it would be right for him to be an uncle on the father’s or mother’s side in the sense of loving or esteeming, and it would be right for him to be a comrade and friend. But this is untenable, because although it demands that Jesus should be given honour in description, it necessarily demands that the eternal One should be temporal through the deficiency necessary in the description of him. And why should he be called father of Christ when, because of what Jesus said to the disciples, ‘You are my brothers’,<sup>113</sup> he is not rightly called uncle to the disciples’ children, or cousin? And how can this be right, when the Almighty has rejected the words of the one who said, ‘We are the sons and the beloved of God’,<sup>114</sup> and has rejected the words of the Arabs when they claimed that the angels were the daughters of God, and looked on this as arrogance?<sup>115</sup> If this were not impossible for him in word and meaning, he would not have rejected it.

39. If it is said, ‘If this is right in the Torah and Gospel, how can it possibly not be right?’, say to him, We have no knowledge of that language, so we do not have to give an explanation of what is in it. We only have to know that taking a son is impossible for God almighty,

<sup>110</sup> Psalm 2.7, though there are overtones of Isaiah 7.14. Cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, p. 25.13.

<sup>111</sup> Exodus 4.22. Cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, p. 25.11–12.

<sup>112</sup> In this argument ‘Abd al-Jabbār continues to follow al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, p. 26.7–12.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. John 15.14, ‘You are my friends (*philoī*)’.

<sup>114</sup> Q 5.18, words attributed to the Jews and Christians.

<sup>115</sup> Q 5.101, 16.57, 52.39.

نعلم ما يستحيل على الله تعالى من اتخاذ الولد، وأنه لا يصحّ أن نتكلّم بها يريد به ذلك أو يريد أشباه ذلك بشيء من كلامهم. ومتى علمنا ذلك حملنا ما ذكر عن التوراة والإنجيل، إن صحّ، على أن المراد به في الجملة غير البنوة؛ ولا يمتنع أن يكون في لغتهم يتجاوز بذلك ويراد به كونه قديماً وإلهاً وربّاً، وإن كان ذلك في لغتنا لا يصحّ.

واللغات تختلف أحوالها في ذلك. ولذلك قلنا إن من نقل لغة إلى لغة فيجب أن يكون عالماً بما يصحّ على الله تعالى وما لا يصحّ من جهة العقل ويكون عالماً بحقيقة اللغتين ومجازهما، لأن اللفظة قد تستعمل في اللغة حقيقة في شيء مجازاً في غيره؛ وما وضع موضعها من اللغة الثانية يستعمل في الحقيقة دون المجاز، فمن نقل مجاز تلك اللغة إلى ما هو حقيقة في هذه اللغة فقد أخطأ. ولا شك أن في هذه الكتب من المجازات ما يجرى مجرى التشابه في القرآن. ومعلوم من حال كثير من المفسرين أنّهم متى فسّروا العربية بالفارسية أخطأوا في الطريقة إمّا جهلاً بالمعنى من جهة العقل وإمّا باللغة. وقد حكى أن المذكور في الإنجيل، "إنّي ذاهب إلى أبي وأبيكم"، وهذا يوجب كونه أباً لهم كما أنّه أب له. وقد قيل أن الصحيح "إنّي ذاهب إلى ربّي وربكم"، وأن الغلط وقع في حكاية الحروف وإبدال الألف بالراء.

40. فإن قيل: "إذا جاز عندكم أن يقول الله تعالى في المسيح أنّه كلمته وروحه، فهلاًّ جوزتم أن يقول أنّه ابنه في الإنجيل؟" قيل له: قد قال شيخنا

and it would not be right for us to argue about what this means, or what things like it mean in any of their arguments. And while we know this, we take what is stated from the Torah and Gospel, if it is true, as having a meaning in general other than sonship. In their language this may not be ruled out, and it can mean that he is eternal, divine and lord, but this is still not right in our language.<sup>116</sup>

The various languages differ in this, and so we say that anyone who translates from one language to another must be knowledgeable about what is rationally correct and incorrect concerning God almighty, and must be knowledgeable about what is literal and figurative in the two languages. For a word may be employed in a language literally about one thing and figuratively about another, but when one is referred to in place of another in the second language it is employed literally and not figuratively. So whoever translates what is figurative in that language into what is literal in this language will have made a mistake. And there is no doubt that in these books there are figurative expressions that are equivalent to what is unclear in the Qur’ān. And it is well known from the examples of many translators that when they translate Arabic into Persian they make mistakes in the process, either through ignorance of the meaning from the point of view of reason or of language.

It has been related that in the Gospel is stated, ‘I am going to my Father, *ab*, and your Father’,<sup>117</sup> and this requires him to be Father to them just as he is Father to him. It has been said that the correct form is, ‘I am going to my Lord, *rabb*, and your Lord’, and that the mistake lies in the transmission of the letters and the substitution of ‘a’ for ‘r’.<sup>118</sup>

40. If it is said, ‘Since it is right in your view that God almighty says that Christ is his word and spirit, then why will you not allow him to

---

<sup>116</sup> In these arguments, that there may be variation in language between faiths but not in basic doctrine, ‘Abd al-Jabbār may have in mind the view recorded from some anonymous Muslim scholars by al-Jāhiz, *Radd*, pp. 25.5–26.5, that God’s mode of operating and the ways he can be referred to differ according to the needs of different communities, and thus for one particular community it might be appropriate for him to adopt a son.

<sup>117</sup> John 20.17.

<sup>118</sup> This intriguing suggestion about one of the most popular proof verses for Muslims (cf. Accad, ‘The Ultimate Proof-Text’), which is indicative of the rich variety within Muslim approaches to Christianity, is evidently derived from the view that Christian scripture is textually corrupt, though through oversight influenced by doctrinal pressure rather than malevolent intent.

أبو علي: إن الغرض بوصفه عيسى بأنه كلمة الله أن الناس يهتدون به كاهتدائهم بالكلمة. ومعنى قولنا إنه روح الله أن الناس يحيون به في دينهم كما يحيون بأرواحهم الكائنة في أجسادهم. وذلك توسع وتشبيه له بالكلمة التي هي الدلالة والروح الذي يحتاج الحي منّا إليه. وهذا كما يسمّى الكلام الذي يهتدى به نوراً وشفاءً، من حيث يعرف به الحق كما يُعرف الطريق بالنور، ومن حيث تقع به النجاة في الدين كما يقع بالدواء الشفاء. ولا يجب إذا تجوز بكلمة في غير موضعها أن يتجوّز بأخرى من غير دلالة، فلذلك لم نقل في عيسى إنه ابن الله قياساً على قولنا إنه روح الله وكلمته. وكذلك قيل في جبريل إنه الروح، ولم يُقل فيه إنه الابن، ولا فصل بين من طلب منّا إطلاق لفظة الابن عليه، من حيث وصفناه بأنه روح وبين مطالبتنا بأن يسمّى أباً وأخاً لله قياساً على ذلك، لأنّ معانى الجميع في الحقيقة لا تصحّ في الله، ولا الوجوه التي يقال فيها على جهة المجاز إن الإنسان ابن لغيره تصحّ في الله تعالى على ما قدمنا ذكره. فالمطالبة بذلك ساقطة.

41. وليس لأحد أن يقول: "هلاًّ جوّزتم أن يتخذة تعالى ولداً على جهة الرحمة، من حيث لم يكن له من يريه؟" لأن ذلك يوجب في آدم أن يكون ابناً له، ويوجب في الملائكة التي لا أب لها أنّها أولاد الله، وإنّما قيل فيمن رقّ على غيره قلبه وتبنّاه أنّه أب له، لأنّه قد أجراه مجرى ابنه. وهذا المعنى يستحيل في الله. وقد بيّنا أن معنى الخلّة في الحقيقة يصحّ في إبراهيم، من

say that he is his Son in the Gospel?’<sup>119</sup> say to him, Our master Abū ‘Alī said,<sup>120</sup> ‘The intention in his describing Jesus as word of God is that people would be guided by him as they are guided by a word. And the meaning of our saying that he is the spirit of God is that people will be given life by him in their faith as they are given life by their spirits which are in their bodies.’ This is comprehensive, and it compares him with a word which is a sign, and the spirit upon which a living being among us depends. It is like a word through which is guidance being called light and healing, because truth is known through it just as the way is known through light, and because deliverance in religion is provided through it just like healing through a remedy. And if a word can be used metaphorically out of its context, it does not follow that another can be used metaphorically without evidence. And thus we do not say that Jesus was Son of God by analogy with our saying that he was a spirit and word of God. In a similar way it is said that Gabriel is a spirit,<sup>121</sup> though it is not said that he is the son, and there is no difference between one of us who seeks to use the term ‘son’ for him because we describe him as spirit, and our claim that he should be called God’s father or brother by analogy with this. For general meanings are not literally appropriate to God, and neither are those instances in which a man is metaphorically called someone else’s son, as we have mentioned above, appropriate to God almighty. So the claim that this is so collapses.

41. No one may say, ‘Why will you not allow the Almighty to take a son in the sense of mercy, as long as it was not he who brought him up?’ For this will require Adam to be his son, and require the angels, who have no father, to be children of God. For, indeed, someone who has compassion on another and adopts him is called his father, because he has treated him as he would his son. But this meaning is impossible for God. We have demonstrated that ‘friendship’ in a literal

<sup>119</sup> Q 4.171. This anonymous Christian voice detects echoes of Christian titles for Jesus in the Qur’ān, and tries to make a case that they are no different from the title ‘Son’.

<sup>120</sup> This is a further quotation from Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī; cf. Thomas, ‘Mu‘tazilī Response’, pp. 304–305. It presumably originates from the same work as the other arguments which ‘Abd al-Jabbār takes from him, probably his lost *Radd ‘alā al-Naṣārā*, though his lost *tafsīr* is another likely source.

<sup>121</sup> The angel Gabriel is conventionally identified as the spirit mentioned in such verses as Q 2.87, 16.102 and 26.193–195.

حيث اختصّه وائتمنه على وحيه، ويصحّ في سائر الأنبياء، عليهم السلام، وإن غلب ذلك في إبراهيم. وإن كان لا يصحّ ذلك في المؤمنين، لأنّه، جلّ وعزّ، لم يخصّهم بالعلم والوحي. فبطل بهذه الجملة تسمية عيسى بأنّه ابن الله.

وأما تسميتهم له بأنّه كلمة الله، فلا تصحّ في الحقيقة لأنّ الكلام على الحقيقة هو الحروف المنظومة وعيسى هو جسم، فلا يصحّ كونه كلاماً، وإنما قيل فيه إنّ كلمة الله من حيث يُهتدى به وبدعائه.

42. وقد قال أبو عثمان: إنّما سمّي عيسى روحاً على حسب ما سمّي جبريل روح الله وروح القدس وعلى حسب ما سمّي جلّ وعزّ القرآن بذلك فقال: وكذلك أوحينا إليك روحاً من أمرنا، وقال: تنزل الملائكة بالروح من أمره، ولم يوجب ذلك القول بأن جبريل أو القرآن أبناء الله، فكذلك لا يجب مثله في المسيح. فأما قوله تعالى: فنفخنا فيه من روحنا، فليس المراد به الحقيقة،<sup>1</sup> لأن ذلك يستحيل في الله، جلّ وعزّ، وهذا كقوله في قصّة آدم: فإذا سوّيته ونفخت فيه من روحي فقعوا له ساجدين. ولم يوجب ذلك أن يكون روحاً لله في الحقيقة أو ابناً له، فكذلك القول في عيسى.

43. وهذه الجملة تسقط ما حكيناه عنهم في التثليث وسائر ما يفرعونه عليه من نحو تفسيرهم الأقانيم بما فسّروه وضرّبه في ذلك الأمثال، لأنّ الكثير من ذلك يؤوّل إلى العبارة. وما قدمناه من الدلالة على أنّه تعالى لا يصحّ أن يكون جسماً يُبطل كثيراً من ألفاظهم وأمثلتهم، لأنّ ظاهرها يوهم كونه

<sup>1</sup>م: به في الحقيقة.

sense is appropriate for Abraham, because he specially favoured him and entrusted him with his revelation. It is appropriate for the other prophets, peace be upon them, although it is more so for Abraham. But it is not appropriate for believers, because the great and mighty One has not specially favoured them with knowledge and revelation. So, in view of all this to call Jesus Son of God is proved wrong.

As for them calling him Word of God, this is not literally correct because a word is literally letters joined together, and Jesus was a body. So he could not correctly be a word, for he can only be called word of God in that there is guidance through him and his call.

42. Abū ‘Uthmān<sup>122</sup> has said, ‘Jesus is called spirit only in the sense that Gabriel is called spirit of God and holy spirit, and in the sense that the great and mighty One calls the Qur’ān this, for he says, “Thus we have inspired in you a spirit of our command”,<sup>123</sup> and, “He sends down the angels with the spirit of his command”.<sup>124</sup> This does not necessitate saying that Gabriel or the Qur’ān are sons of God, and similarly the same does not follow in the case of Jesus. As for the words of the Almighty, “Thus we breathed our spirit into him”,<sup>125</sup> its intention is not literal, because this is impossible for God, great and mighty. It is like his words in the story of Adam, “When I have fashioned him and breathed my spirit into him, fall down in prostration before him”,<sup>126</sup> and this does not necessitate that he was literally the spirit of God or his son. The same is said about Jesus.’

43. All this destroys what we have related from them about the Trinity and everything they derive from it, such as the interpretation of the hypostases they offer and the images they present for it, because the majority of this is derived from expression. The evidence we have given previously that the Almighty cannot properly be a body<sup>127</sup> disproves the majority of their utterances and images, since the manifest sense of these project him as being a body. Whoever looks closely at all of

<sup>122</sup> Cf. al-Jāhīz, *Radd*, pp. 36.1–37.10. ‘Abd al-Jabbār summarises this argument rather than quoting it directly.

<sup>123</sup> Q 42.52.

<sup>124</sup> Q 16.2.

<sup>125</sup> Q 22.12.

<sup>126</sup> Q 15.29, 38.72.

<sup>127</sup> This would have occurred in one of the lost earlier parts of the *Mughnī*.

جسمًا. ومن تأمل هذه الجملة علم سقوط سائر ما يتعلقون به من المذاهب والأمثلة، فلا وجه لتتبع جميعه على التفصيل.

### فصل: في إبطال قولهم في الاتحاد وما يتصل به

44. اعلم أن الذى نتشغل بإفساده ما يُعقل من مذهبهم في هذا الباب دون ما لا يصح اعتقاده. وقد حكينا عنهم في ذلك جملة، ونحن ندلّ على فساد ما يعقل منها، ونقسم ما يحتمله الكلام.

لا يخلو قولهم بالاتحاد من وجوه: إمّا أن يقولوا إن الابن من جملة الأقانيم اتّحد بعيسى، أو يقولوا إن المتّحد به الجوهر الذى هو ثلاثة أقانيم. فإن قالوا إن الابن اتّحد به، فلا يخلو من أن يقولوا إن الابن خالق صانع فاعل إله، أو يجعلوا الخالق الإله هو الأب الذى الكلمة ابنه دون الابن.<sup>1</sup>

ثم لا يخلو قولهم "اتّحد به" من وجوه: إمّا أن يقولوا إنّّه على ما كان عليه، لكن مشيئة الابن هي<sup>2</sup> مشيئة المسيح أو مشيئة المسيح هي<sup>41</sup> مشيئته، أو مشيئتهما متغايرة لكن ما يشاؤه أحدهما يجب أن يشاءه الآخر. فهذا نريده بالاتحاد، وإن كانت ذات الإله وذات الإنسان أو جوهرهما على ما كان، أو يقولوا إن الاتحاد قد اقتضى خروج ذاتيهما عما كانتا عليه. ولا يخلو عند ذلك من أن يقولوا إنّّه اتّحد به بأن جاوره وصار عيسى كالطرف له.

<sup>1</sup> ط: الأب. <sup>2</sup> ط، هامش || ط، نص: هو.



this will know the collapse of all the beliefs and images to which they adhere, so there is no reason to pursue it all in detail.

*Chapter: On disproving their teaching about  
the Uniting and what is related to it*

44. Know that what we are concerned to destroy is what can be understood in their belief on this matter rather than what should not be believed.<sup>128</sup> We have already related everything from them about this, and we will show the weakness of what can be understood in it, dividing up what is contained in the argument.

Their teaching about the Uniting must have a number of alternatives: either they say that the Son out of all the hypostases united with Jesus, or they say that the one that united with him was the substance which is the three hypostases. If they say that the Son united with him, they cannot avoid saying that the Son is Creator, Maker, Agent and Divinity; otherwise they make the Creator and Divinity the Father, whose Word is the Son, rather than the Son.<sup>129</sup>

Then their teaching, ‘He united with him’, must have a number of alternatives: either they say that he remained as he was, although the Son’s volition was Christ’s volition; or Christ’s volition was his volition; or their two volitions were distinct although what one of them willed the other must have willed—this is what we mean by the Uniting, with the essence of the Divinity and the essence of the human or the substance of both of them remaining as they were; or they say that the Uniting required both their essences to cease to be what they had been.<sup>130</sup> And following this they have to say that he united with him by becoming adjacent to him, and Jesus became like a part of him.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. §2 above. Again ‘Abd al-Jabbār emphasises that his arguments are against points that can be treated rationally, and implies that parts of Christian doctrine lie outside this.

<sup>129</sup> Abū Ṭisā, in Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 96–107, §§152–160, examines this point at great length, while ‘Abd al-Jabbār here reduces the problem to a few sentences. The matter at issue is the identity of the divine participant in the Incarnation: if this was the Son alone then he must be the true God, because he alone is Agent; if it was the whole Godhead then the real agent is the Father alone, because the other Persons are really his attributes. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s difficulty stems from his insistence upon treating the hypostases as independent entities, which Christians would resist.

<sup>130</sup> The logical alternatives are that the two participants in the act of Uniting remained separate but conformed as regards their wills, or literally became one and so changed in some way. ‘Abd al-Jabbār has reduced the Christians’ explanations to these two abstract possibilities.

وقد حكى ذلك عن بعضهم أنّه قال ”خالطه ومازجه“، أو يقولوا ”إنّه حلّ فيه لا أنّه جاوره“. وقائل هذا القول لا يخلو من أحد أمرين: إمّا أن يقولوا، إنّّه حلّ في جميع أجزاء عيسى، أو يقولوا إنّّه حلّ في جزء منه. هذا إذا قالوا<sup>1</sup> إنّّه وإن اتّحد به فليس يخرج من أن يكون هو وعيسى جوهرين وذاتين، فأما إذا قالوا إنّهما صارا واحداً في الحقيقة على ما حكيناه عن أكثر اليعقوبيّة أنّ الجوهرين صارا جوهرًا واحدًا<sup>2</sup>، فعندهم أن الاتّحاد قد أخرج الذاتين والجوهرين من أن يكونا كذلك إلى أن صارا واحداً. ثم لا يخلو من قال بهذه الأقاويل أن يقول إنّّه إذا اتّحد به يصير متّحداً به أبداً، أو يقولوا إنّّه يتّحد به في حال دون حال. وكذلك لا يخلو قولهم عند موت عيسى وصلبه، على ما يذهبون إليه، أن يقولوا إنّّه يتّحد به كما كان، أو خرج من أن يكون متّحداً به.

فهذه جملة ما تحتمله قسمة العقل في الاتّحاد. ونحن نبين فساد جميعه ثم نبطل قولهم في عبادة المسيح وما يتعلّق به.

45. واعلم أنّ كلام النصارى يدلّ على أن عندهم أن المتّحد بجسم عيسى هو إله قادر على ما لا يصحّ وقوعه إلّا من الله، جلّ وعزّ، لأنّهم يعتمدون في ذلك على أنّه ظهر منه وعليه فعل إلهي، فيجب أن يكون قد اتّحد به ابن الله وكلمته. فلو كان عندهم أنّ الابن لا يجوز أن يفعل ما يختصّ به القديم بالقدرة عليه، لمّا صحّ هذا القول. فلا بدّ لهم من ذلك أو القول بأنّ المتّحد بجسم عيسى هو الأب نفسه؛ فلذلك صحّ أن يظهر منه وعلى يده الفعل الإلهي.

<sup>1</sup>م: إذا قالوا إنّهما صارا واحدا. <sup>2</sup>م: جوهرًا واحدًا. ثم لا يخلو.

This was related from one of them that he said, ‘He mingled with him and mixed with him’; or they say, ‘He inhered in him but did not come into adjacency to him’.<sup>131</sup> The person who says this cannot avoid one of two alternatives: either they should say that he inhered in all the parts of Jesus, or they should say that he inhered in a part of him. Moreover, whether they say that although he united with him neither he nor Jesus ceased to be two substances and essences, or whether they say that they literally became one, according to what we have related from the majority of Jacobites that the two substances became one substance,<sup>132</sup> in their view the Uniting will have made the two substances and essences cease to be thus to being one. Then the one who makes these statements has no alternative to saying that if he united with him he must always have united with him, or they have to say that he united with him in one particular instant. Similarly, their teaching about the death and crucifixion of Jesus, according to what they believe about it, offers them no alternative to saying that he united with him as he was, or ceased to be united with him.

All this is what rational analysis permits about the Uniting. We will demonstrate the error in all of it, and then we will disprove their teaching about the worship of Christ and what is related to it.

45. Know that the Christians’ argument shows that in their view the One who united with the body of Christ was divine and powerful in a way that could only arise from God, great and mighty. For in this they rely upon divine actions appearing from him and upon him.<sup>133</sup> So it follows that the one who united with him was the Son of God and his Word. But if in their view the Son could not do what the eternal One had particular power over, then this teaching would not be correct. But they have no alternative to this, or the teaching that the One who united with the body of Jesus was the Father himself, and thus it would be right for divine actions to appear from him and through him.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Abū ʿĪsā, in Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 88–89, § 11.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, § 12.

<sup>133</sup> This is the first of a number of references in this part of the refutation to Jesus’ miracles as the basic justification for claiming he was divine as well as human.

<sup>134</sup> If Jesus’ miracles are the basis of proof then, ‘Abd al-Jabbār argues, the dilemma for the Christians is either that the Son united and must have divine powers to cause miracles that are his alone and will thus be divine independently of the other hypostases, or that if the whole Godhead united then it, and effectively the Father, was the true Agent of miracles.

وقولهم في عبادة المسيح يوجب ما ذكرناه من وجهين: أحدهما أن الإله اتحد به، ولذلك يستحق أن يُعبد من جهة لاهوته، لا من جهة ناسوته؛ وثانيهما أن الابن هو المتحد، لكنه يستحق العبادة كالأب. وقولهم إن المسيح جوهران، لاهوت وناسوت، يوجب القول بأن المتحد به إله، قالوا إنه الابن أو الجوهر المشترك على الأقانيم الثلاثة. وما يبطل به قولهم في الاتحاد يبطل به كلاً هذين الوجهين. فأما من قال: "إنه اتحد به بمعنى المشيئة"، فقولهم ينقسم إلى ثلاثة أوجه: أحدها أن مشيئتهما متغايرة، لكن يجب أن يتفقا في المشيئة؛ وثانيها أن مشيئة اللاهوت هو مشيئة الناسوت؛ وثالثها أن مشيئة الناسوت هو مشيئة اللاهوت.

#### فصل: في أن مشيئة القديم سبحانه غير مشيئة المسيح عليه السلام

46. والذي يدل على إبطال الأول أن من حق كل قادرين إن<sup>1</sup> تصحّ عليهما الإرادة والمشيئة أن لا يمتنع أن يريد أحدهما خلاف ما يريد الآخر، ولا يمتنع أن يكره أحدهما ما يريد الآخر، كما لا يمتنع اختلاف دواعيهما<sup>2</sup> في الأفعال. ولا فصل بين من قال إنه يجب اتفاق مشيئة القديم والمسيح وبين من قال إنه يجب أن تتفق دواعيهما، وإنه يجب أن تتفق أفعالهما حتى يصحّ على كل واحد منهما من الفعل ما يصحّ على الآخر. وقد علمنا بطلان ذلك بمثل ما به علمنا بطلان القول بأن كل صفة تحصل لأحدهما يصح حصولها للآخر من أكل وشرب وقتل وصلب إلى غير ذلك.

<sup>1</sup> ط: أن. <sup>2</sup> م: دواعيهما وإنه يجب أم تتفق.

Their teaching about the worship of Christ necessitates what we have said in two respects. One of them is that the Divinity united with him, and thus he deserved to be worshipped with respect to his divine nature though not with respect to his human nature. And the second of the two is that it was the Son who united, but he deserves worship like the Father.<sup>135</sup>

Their teaching that Christ was two substances, divine nature and human nature, necessitates saying that the One who united with him was divine, whether they say he was the Son or the substance that comprehends the three hypostases. And their teaching about the Uniting is proved false by that by which each of these two alternatives is proved false. As for the one who says: ‘He united with him in the sense of volition’,<sup>136</sup> their teaching divides into three aspects: one is that their two volitions were different, but they necessarily agreed in volition; the second is that the volition of the divine nature was the volition of the human nature; and the third is that the volition of the human nature was the volition of the divine nature.

*Chapter: That the volition of the eternal One, may he be blessed,  
was other than the volition of Christ, peace be upon him*

46. What indicates the falseness of the first is that it is true of all pairs of beings with power that one of them will inevitably will the contrary of what the other wills, if will and volition are possible for them, and one will inevitably reject what the other wills, just as their motives for action will inevitably differ. And there is no difference between someone who says that the volition of the eternal One and Christ must be in conformity and someone who says that their motives must be in conformity and that their actions must be in conformity until an action is right for the one that is right for the other. We know full well the falseness of this, just as we know the falseness of the statement that every attribute that occurs in one of them should occur in the other, such as eating, drinking, killing, crucifixion and so on.

<sup>135</sup> Again, the second alternative leads to the difficulty that the Son must be treated separately from the Godhead as a whole.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. al-Nāshī, above pp. 38–39, §2. Uniting as conformity of wills alone is unknown to Abū Ḥisām. It appears to be either an interpretation put forward for Muslim consumption by Diophysite apologists, or an inference developed by Muslims on the basis of thinking that emanated from Diophysite sources.

وبعد، فإن من حقّ المرید للشئ أن يكون عالمًا به أو في حكم العالم. وقد علّم أن القديم، جلّ وعزّ، عالم لنفسه يعلم ما سيكون في المستقبل من المصالح وغيرها، والمسيح يعلم بعلم. وكما لا يجب أن يعلم كلّ ما يعلمه القديم تعالى، فكذلك لا يجب أن يريد كلّ ما يريده.

47. وبعد، فلا يخلو أن<sup>1</sup> يكون في حال ما بعثه الله نبياً وصار مسيحاً<sup>2</sup> قد شاء كلّ ما قد شأه الله أو شاء ذلك حالاً بعد حال بحسب ما يشأه تعالى. ولا يمكن أن يقال بالوجه الأوّل، لأن في تلك الحال ليس القديم شائياً لجميع ما يشاء، لأنّه يريد الأمور التي هي من فعله وفعل عباده على الترتيب حالاً بعد حال. فكيف يقال إنّ عيسى قد شأه في تلك الحال أجمع؟ وإن كان شاء ذلك على الترتيب، فهو في تلك الحال شائياً لنفسه، فكيف يقال إنّّه اتّحد بمعنى اتّحاد المشيئة وإنّما اتّفق بعض مشيئتهما؟

وبعد، فإن هذا القول يوجب في سائر الأنبياء مثل قولهم في عيسى وأن يكون متّحدا بجميعهم، وجميعهم أبناء له، لأن عيسى إنّما يجب أن يوافقه في المشيئة لكونه نبياً ولظهور المعجزات عليه، وذلك واجب في سائر الأنبياء.

<sup>1</sup> م: ط: يعلم كلّ ما يعلمه القديم تعالى، فكذلك لا يجب أن يريد كلّ ما يريده. وبعد، فلا يخلو أن يكون في.  
<sup>2</sup> م: مستحقاً.

Furthermore, it is true of a being who wills something that he must know about it or be in a position of knowing. It is known that the eternal One, great and mighty, is knowing of himself and knows future good and otherwise, and Christ knows by knowledge. And just as he cannot know all that the almighty, eternal One knows, so likewise he cannot will all that he wills.

47. Furthermore, when he was in the condition of prophet as God sent him, and he became Christ,<sup>137</sup> he must have willed all that God willed, or have willed this stage after stage in accordance with what the Almighty was willing. It is not possible to speak of the first alternative, because in this condition the eternal One could not have been willing all that he wills, because he wills matters which are of his action, and the action of his servants is in the form of succession, one circumstance after another. So how can it be said that Jesus willed everything in this circumstance? And if he willed this in the form of succession, in this circumstance he would have been willing of himself, so how can it be said that he united in the sense of uniting of volition, when only part of the volition of the two of them was in conformity?<sup>138</sup>

Furthermore, this teaching necessitates for all of the prophets the same as their teaching for Jesus and that he united with all of them and they were all his sons, because Jesus could only have been in conformity with him in volition because of his being prophet and because of the appearance of miracles through him. And this must apply to all the

---

<sup>137</sup> This typically Muslim statement about the human Jesus as a messenger sent by God, points to a possible presupposition in ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s mind that the Incarnation was something that happened to Jesus at some stage in his life.

<sup>138</sup> Since the modes of divine and human willing are starkly different, conformity of wills would mean that the human Jesus, whose willing would be in the form of successive acts, must have willed all that happens, as God does, and that his willing would not derive from an accidental attribute that was created in him but from his own self, and was unchanging.

In this very abbreviated retort, ‘Abd al-Jabbār sums up the problem of God willing outside time and human willing within time (though he may not express it in this form), and of the accidental mode of human willing opposed to the essential mode of God’s willing.

بل لا يمتنع أن يكون في المكلفين من يعلم المصالح ويشاء ما يشاؤه الله من الطاعات وغيره، فيجب أن يكون، جلّ وعزّ، متّحداً به. على أن عندهم أنّه اتّحد به في ابتداء أمره، وإن كان في تلك الحال لم يوافقه في جميع الإرادات، فهلاًّ صحّ مثله في سائر من وافقه في مشيئة واحدة أو إرادات مخصوصة من عبادِه. وذلك يُبطل تخصيصهم المسيح بما خصّوه به. وبعد، فلو وجب الاتحاد باتّفاق المشيئة دون الاتفاق في العلم بالشئ أو الإدراك له حتى يقال إن كلّ من علم ما علمه أو أدرك ما أدركه يجب أن يكون تعالى متّحداً به. وإذا لم يجب ذلك فيه، فكذلك في المشيئة.

فصل: في إبطال قول من قال ”اتّحد الله جلّ وعزّ بعيسى عليه السلام بأن صارت مشيئة اللاهوت مشيئة الناسوت“

48. وأما الذي يبطل قولهم بأنّه اتّحد به بأن صار مشيئة اللاهوت مشيئة الناسوت فهو أن الدلالة قد دلّت على أن القديم تعالى يريد بإرادة لا في محلّ، على ما نبينّه من بعد. وقد علم أن الجسم لا يصلح أن يريد إلا بإرادة تحلّ في بعضه. فإذا صحّ ذلك لم يجوز أن تكون إرادته، جلّ وعزّ، إرادة للمسيح،



prophets.<sup>139</sup> Furthermore, there is no reason why among responsible people there should not be one who knows what is good and wills the obedience and so on that God wills, and so the great and mighty One must have united with him.

However, in their view he united with him at the very start of his life, even though in this condition he could not have been in conformity with him in every act of will. So why should the like not be true for all among his servants who are in conformity with him in one volition or specific acts of the will? This disproves their making Christ particular in the way they do.

Furthermore, if the Uniting entailed conformity of volition and not conformity of knowledge of a thing or perception of it, it could be said that the exalted One must be united with everyone who knows what he knows or perceives what he perceives. And if this is not necessary for him, it is the same with volition.<sup>140</sup>

*Chapter: On disproving the words of the one who says, ‘God, great and mighty, united with Jesus, peace be upon him, by the volition of the divine nature becoming the volition of the human nature’*

48. What disproves their teaching that he united with him by the volition of the divine nature becoming the volition of the human nature is that evidence has shown that the almighty, eternal One wills by a will that is not in a substrate,<sup>141</sup> as we shall show later. And it is known that a body only fittingly wills by a will that inheres in part of it. If this is correct, then the will of the great and mighty One cannot be the will of

<sup>139</sup> This comparison recalls earlier Muslim comparisons in which actual miracles of Jesus and of prophets were compared in order to show how they corresponded, and thus removed grounds for arguing that Jesus was uniquely divine. Al-Māturīdī’s argument on pp. 100–105 above, §4 and 5, and al-Baḳillānī’s on pp. 192–197, §§40–43, are examples, and cf. Thomas, ‘Miracles of Jesus’. ‘Abd al-Jabbār has abstracted the principle underlying these comparisons, and argues that what must apply to the one must also apply to the others.

<sup>140</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s point here is not entirely clear, though he seems to be arguing that it is arbitrary to define the Uniting as conformity of wills alone, because it could just as easily be defined as conformity of knowledge or understanding. But just as the coincidental conformity between the divine and human in respect of these does not entail uniting, so conformity of wills need not.

<sup>141</sup> God does not will by an attribute that is added to his being, in the way that human will is an accident that inheres in the substance of the individual, which is then its substrate; cf. in general Frank, *Beings and their Attributes*, pp. 69–72.

مع أنّها لم توجد في بعضه، كما لا يصحّ أن يكون فعله فعلاً للمسيح؛ مع أنّه لم يوجد من جهته، لأن من حقّ الفعل أن لا يختصّ بكونه فعلاً لفاعله إلاّ بوقوعه من جهته، كما لا تكون الإرادة لإرادة للجسم إلاّ بوجودها في بعضه. فمن أجاز أن تكون إرادة القديم إرادة له لزمه تجويز كون فعله محلاً له.

وبعد، فلم صارت إرادته بأن تكون إرادة للمسيح أولى من أن تكون إرادة لسائر الأجسام مع أن تعلّقها به كتعلّقها بسائر الأجسام؟ وهذا يوجب كون جميع الأحياء مريدين بإرادته تعالى، وذلك فاسد لأنّه يوجب أن لا يصحّ أن يريد أحدهما القبيح من حيث يستحيل ذلك في الله، جلّ وعزّ، ويوجب أن لا يصحّ أن يريد أحدهم خلاف ما يريده تعالى، ولا يكره ما يريده، ولا تختلف أحوالهم في ذلك إذا أراد القديم تعالى الشيء.

وبعد، فلو جاز أن تكون إرادته، مع أنّها لا في محلّ، إرادة له، لصحّ أن تكون إرادتهم وعلومهم وسائر ما يختصّ بهم متعلّقا بالله تعالى. وذلك يوجب استحالة كون أحدهما كارهاً لما أَراده<sup>1</sup> الآخر وعالمًا بما جهله، ويوجب كونه تعالى جاهلاً بما يوجد في قلب الواحد منا. وذلك يخرج من كونه عالمًا لنفسه، بل يوجب كونه عالمًا بالشيء جاهلاً به إذا علمه زيد وجهله عمرو، ويوجب كونه مشتتاً ومحتاجاً، لأنّه لا يجوز أن يكون موصوفاً بالعلم الحالّ في قلوبنا دون الشهوة، مع أن أحدهما قد وجد على الحدّ الذي وجد الآخر عليه. وفساد ذلك أجمع يقضى بفساد هذا الأصل.

وبعد، فإن هذا القول يوجب أن يكون جلّ وعزّ متّحداً بسائر الأحياء وأن لا يكون لعيسى في ذلك اختصاص. ويجب على كلّ حالّ أن يكون متّحداً بسائر الأنبياء، لأنّ حالهم وحال عيسى في أيّ شيء قالوه في هذا الباب لا يختلف.

<sup>1</sup> م: علمه.

Christ, apart from it not existing in part of him, just as it is not correct for his action to be the action of Christ, apart from it not existing with him. For an action is rightly specified as being an action of the one who performs only it by its occurring from him, just as will can be the will of a body by only existing in part of it. So whoever permits the will of the eternal One to be his will must permit his action to inhere within him.

Furthermore, why should his will be the will of Christ any more than it should be the will of all bodies, apart from being attached to him any more than being attached to all bodies? This necessitates that all living things should be willing by the will of the Almighty. This is wrong, because it would require that none of them could will what is bad because this is impossible for God, great and mighty, and it would require that none of them could will anything different from what the Almighty willed, and could not hate what he willed, and nor could their circumstances in this differ if the almighty eternal One willed a thing.

Furthermore, if it were possible for his will to be will to him,<sup>142</sup> although it was not in a substrate, then their<sup>143</sup> will and knowledges and all that is particular to them could correctly be attached to God almighty. And this would necessitate the impossibility of either of them hating what the other willed or knowing what he did not know, and it would require the Almighty not to know what existed in the heart of any of us. It would exclude him from knowing of himself, and it would require him to be knowing a thing and not knowing it if Zayd knew it and ‘Amr did not know it. And it would require him to be desirous and needy, because he could not be characterised by knowledge that inhered in our hearts and not desire, apart from the fact that one of them would exist in the manner that the other did. The wrongness of all this entails the wrongness of the principle.

Furthermore, this teaching requires the great and mighty One to be united with all living beings and for Jesus to have no specific quality in this. And at any rate, he must have united with all the prophets, because their circumstance and Jesus’ in whatever they mention in this matter did not differ.

<sup>142</sup> The two pronouns refer respectively to God and Jesus.

<sup>143</sup> These are all created sentient beings.

فصل: في إبطال قول من قال "اتّحد به بأن صارت مشيئة المسيح مشيئة له"<sup>1</sup>

49. وأمّا الذى يبطل قولهم بأنّ القديم جلّ وعزّ اتّحد بالمسيح بأن صارت مشيئة المسيح مشيئة له فهو أن مشيئة المسيح يجب أن تكون حالة في بعضه، وإلاّ لم يكن لها به تعلّق واختصاص. وما يحلّ في قلب عيسى لا يجوز أن يوجب الحكم للقديم، لأنّه لا يختصّ به ولأنّ ذلك يوجب أن سائر ما يحلّ في قلبه يوجب الحكم له. وفي ذلك إيجاب كونه جاهلاً بجهل لو وجد في قلبه ومشتهياً بما يوجد في قلبه ويوجب كونه ناظراً بما يوجد في قلبه وظاناً نادماً، وكلّ ذلك يستحيل عليه تعالى، فيجب إبطال ما قالوه في مشيئته أنّها مشيئة له.

وبعد، فلم صارت مشيئته بأن تكون مشيئة لله أوّل من مشيئة سائر العباد مع أن تعلّق جميع ذلك بالقديم تعالى على سواء. وهذا يوجب سائر ما قدمناه من قبل من وجوب كونه تعالى مريداً للقيح ومريداً كارهاً للشئ الواحد إذا أَرادَه زيد وكرهه عمرو بل يوجب صحّة كونه عالماً جاهلاً. وما أدى إلى ذلك يجب فساد.

وبعد، فإن عيسى قبل أن يُولد ويُخلق ويصير حيّاً لا بدّ من كونه تعالى شائياً للأُمور مريداً لها. وقد علّم أنّه لا يصحّ كونه مريداً لذلك بإرادة المسيح، لأنّه في هذه الحال ليس بموجود حيّ، فلا بدّ من أن يكون مريداً بإرادة لا في محلّ، لأنّه لا يصحّ القول بأنّه يريد بإرادة حيّ آخر، لأنّ الكلام قبل خلق كلّ حيّ، لأنّ أوّل من يخلقه لا بدّ من أن يريد خلقه. ولذا وجب كونه مريداً بإرادة لا في محلّ والحال هذه فيجب أن يكون بعد خلقه الخلق مريداً بإرادة لا في محلّ، لأنّ ما أوجب ذلك في حال يوجبه في كلّ حال من

<sup>1</sup>ط: اتّحد به بأن مازجه وجاوره واتخذ هيكلا ومحلّ.

*Chapter: On disproving the words of the one who says,  
‘He united with him by Christ’s volition becoming his volition’*

49. What disproves their teaching that the eternal One, great and mighty, united with Christ by Christ’s volition becoming his volition is that Christ’s volition must have inhered in part of him, otherwise it could not have had any attachment or particularity to him.<sup>144</sup> And what inhered in the heart of Jesus could not rightly have been apportioned to the eternal One, because it is not particular to him, and because this necessitates that all that inhered in his heart must be apportioned to him. This means that he must be ignorant through ignorance if it existed in his heart, and desirous through what existed in his heart. And he would have to be looking, thinking and repenting through what existed in his heart. All of this is impossible for the exalted One, so it necessarily disproves what they say about his volition being volition to him.<sup>145</sup>

Furthermore, how could his volition be the volition of God any more than the volition of all humans, apart from the fact that all of this would be attached to the almighty, eternal One in the same way. And this would necessitate all that we have set out above about the exalted One having to will bad, and willing and hating the same thing if Zayd willed it and ‘Amr hated it; indeed, he would rightly have to be knowing and ignorant. This all amounts to the fact that it must be wrong.

Furthermore, before Jesus was born or created or became a living being, the Almighty must without doubt have been intending and willing matters. So it is known by this that he could not rightly be willing by Christ’s will, because at this time he was not existent or living. So he must without doubt have been willing by a will not in a substrate, because it is not right to say that he wills by the will of another living being. For the Word was before the creation of all things, since he must without doubt have willed to create the first thing he did create. Because of this, he must have been willing by a will that was not in a substrate, and this circumstance means that after his creation of the creation he must have been willing by a will that was not in a substrate, because what necessitates it in one circumstance necessitates

---

<sup>144</sup> Since Christ was human, his volition would have been an accidental attribute that qualified his being by becoming attached to it through inhering in part of him.

<sup>145</sup> The two pronouns refer to Christ and God.

حيث علم أن تعلّق العلل بما يوجب الحكم له لا يتغيّر. على أن هذا القول يوجب كونه متّحداً بغير عيسى كاتّحاده به، وأن يكون غيره ابنًا له كهو. وفي هذا إبطال مذهبهم أصلاً.

**فصل: في إبطال قول من قال ”اتّحد به بأن مازجه وجاوره واتّخذ هيكلاً ومحلاً“<sup>1</sup>**

50. وأمّا قول من قال إنّه اتّحد به بأن مازجه وجاوره واتّخذ هيكلاً ومحلاً فإنّه يبطل بما دللنا به على أنّه تعالى ليس<sup>2</sup> بجوهر ولا جسم، لأنّه إذا ثبت ذلك فيه وكانت المجاورة إنّما تصحّ بين الجواهر والأجسام، فكيف يقال إنّه جلّ وعزّ مازجه وجاوره واتّحد به على هذا الوجه؟ وقد بيّنا أنّ القول بذلك فيه يوجب حدوثه وإخراجه من كونه قديماً إلهاً، ويوجب إستحالة وقوع الأجسام منه. وليس لأحد أن يقول إنّه جاوره ومازجه على خلاف ما يعقلونه من مجاورة الجواهر، فلا يؤدى القول بذلك إلى ما ذكرتموه، لأنّ المجاورة لا تعقل إلّا على هذا الوجه ولا تصحّ إلّا في الجواهر. ولا فرق بين من أثبتّه مجاوراً لعيسى على وجه لا يُعقل وبين من أثبتّه مماساً له ومؤلفاً مركّباً معه وبعضاً له على وجه لا يُعقل.

51. فإن قال: ”ألستم تقولون إنّه تعالى فى كلّ مكان لا على وجه المجاورة؟ فإذا استجزتم ذلك، فجوزوا لنا مثله فيما قلناه“؛ قيل له: إنّنا نقول ذلك مجازاً

<sup>1</sup> ط: اتّحد سبحانه بعيسى عليه السلام بمعنى أنّه حلّ فيه. <sup>2</sup> م: مازجه وجاوره واتّحد به على هذا الوجه؟

it in every circumstance, since it is known that the attachment of causes to what imposes a status upon it does not change. However, this teaching necessitates his being united to others than Jesus, just like his uniting with him, and others than him being his sons like him. In this their faith is disproved in its foundation.

*Chapter: On disproving the teaching of the one who says,  
‘He united with him by mixing with him, by coming into  
adjacency with him and by taking him as a temple and location’*

50. As far as the teaching of the person who says that he united with him by mixing with him, coming into adjacency with him and taking him as a temple and location,<sup>146</sup> it is disproved by what we have proved about the exalted One not being a substrate or a body.<sup>147</sup> For if this is affirmed about him, and adjacency is only applicable between substances and bodies, how can it be said that the great and mighty One mixed with him, came into adjacency with him, and united with him in this manner?

We have already shown that teaching of this kind about him necessitates him being temporal and ceasing to be eternal and divine, and necessitates the impossibility of bodies occurring from him.<sup>148</sup> And no one can say that he came into adjacency with him and mingled with him in a different way from what they construe adjacency of substances to be, so the teaching about this does not amount to what they say it does. For adjacency can only be construed in this manner and is only possible for substances. And there is no difference between the person who affirms that he came into adjacency with Jesus in a manner that cannot be construed and the person who affirms that he touched him, joined and combined with him, and was part of him in a manner that cannot be construed.

51. If he says, ‘Do you yourselves not say that the Almighty is in every place, not in the manner of adjacency?’<sup>149</sup> So if you acknowledge this,

<sup>146</sup> Cf. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s introduction, pp. 232–233 above, §6.

<sup>147</sup> This would have been given in one of the lost early parts of the *Mughnī*.

<sup>148</sup> Again, ‘Abd al-Jabbār would have shown this in one of the lost early parts of the work.

<sup>149</sup> The opponent, who may be real or hypothetical, could be alluding to such verses as Q 2.255 and 57.4.

ونعنى به أنّه مدبرّ في كلّ مكان وعالم بكلّ مكان وبما يحدث فيه على ما بيّناه من قبل. فالذى قصدناه بهذا القول معقول وصحّة استعمال هذه اللفظة فيه مجازاً مفهوماً. وليس كذلك ما قلّته لأنك جعلته مجاوراً<sup>1</sup> له في الحقيقة ومختصاً بجسم عيسى في هذا الوجه دون غيره، ثم نقضت ذلك بقولك إنّهُ لا يجاوره كمجاورة الجواهر. وهذا نفى لما أثبتته.

وبعد، فإذا صحّ كونه مجاوراً لعيسى، فهلاًّ صحّ كونه مجاوراً لغيره من الأنبياء وغيرهم؟ ولم خصصتم عيسى بأنّه اتّحد به دون غيره؟ وهلاًّ جوزّتم أن يتّحد به في وقت دون وقت بأن يجاوره في حال دون حال؟ وهلاًّ جوزّتم كونه مجاوراً للجماادات ومتّحداً بها؟ وأى فضيلة لعيسى بهذا الاتحاد مع أن حاله وحال سائر الأجسام فيه بمنزلة؟

52. فإن قال: ”إنّما أثبتته متّحداً به دون سائر الأجسام لظهور الأفعال الإلهيّة منه وعلى يده“؛ قيل له: فأجز<sup>2</sup> كونه متّحداً بسائر الأنبياء لهذه العلّة، وجوزّ خروجه من أن يكون متّحداً به في حال لا يظهر المعجز عليه. وبعد، فإنّ ظهور المعجز على يده لا يدلّ على أنّه حصل فيه بالمجاورة أو غيرها، لأنّه، جلّ وعزّ، قادر على اختراع ذلك، وإن لم يكن في مكان. وبعد، فلم صار بأن يكون متّحداً بعيسى لهذه العلّة بأوّل من أن يكون متّحداً بالجسم الذى أحياه الله على يده وفي عين الأكّمة الذى أبرأه الله على يده؟ بل يجب أن يكون هذا القول أولى لأن ذلك هو محلّ الفعل دون عيسى، وإلاّ فإن صحّ وقوع ذلك

<sup>1</sup>خ: مجازاً. <sup>2</sup>ط: فأجز.



then allow us something similar in what we teach’; say to him, We only say this figuratively, and we mean by this that he is overseer in every place and knows every place and what happens in it, as we have shown above. And what we intend by this teaching is comprehensible, and it is accepted that using these words about him figuratively is correct. But this is not the case in what you say, because you have placed him in adjacency to him literally, and particular to the body of Jesus and no other in this respect. And then you contradict this by saying that he did not come into adjacency with him like the adjacency of substances. This is a denial of what you have affirmed.

Furthermore, if he rightly came into adjacency with Jesus, then why could he not rightly have come into adjacency with prophets beside him, or others? And why do you make Jesus particular by his uniting with him and not others? And why do you not allow that he united with him at a single moment by coming into adjacency with him in a single circumstance? And why do you not allow him to be in adjacency to inanimate objects and to unite with them? And what superiority did Jesus have in this uniting, when he and all bodies have the same standing?<sup>150</sup>

52. If he says, ‘Indeed, I affirm that he united with him and not other bodies because of the appearance of divine actions from him and through him’; say to him, Then allow him to have united with all the prophets for this reason, and permit him to cease being united with him in circumstances when he did not make a miracle happen through him. Furthermore, the appearance of a miracle through him is not evidence of his being existent within him through adjacency or anything else, because the great and mighty One is able to accomplish this even though he is not in the place. Furthermore, why was he united with Jesus for this reason any more than he was united with the body that God restored to life through him or in the eye of the blind man that God healed through him? This must be the more obvious teaching,

---

<sup>150</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār returns to the point he has made repeatedly in previous sections, that if God could unite with Jesus, he could do so with prophets like him. He takes it one stage further here by suggesting that if this could have happened, then it might have happened only at the moment Jesus performed miracles and not at other times. And if this is the case, then God will have more appropriately come into adjacency with the actual physical objects that were the subject of Jesus’ miracles. He explores this issue further in the next paragraph.

من غير اتحاد به ليجوزن وقوعه من غير اتحاد بعيسى، بل من غير اتحاد أصلاً. وفي هذا إبطال هذا القول.

على أنه لا يخلو من أن يكون مجاوراً لكل أجزاء عيسى أو لبعضها، ولا يصحّ كونه مجاوراً لجميع أجزائه لأن ذلك يوجب كونه أجزاء كثيرة. وقد ثبت بالدليل كونه واحداً ويوجب أن يكون في حال واحدة في أماكن، وذلك يستحيل على كل ما يصحّ عليه المجاور، ولولا ذلك لم يمتنع كون الجسم في مكانين. وإن كان مجاور جزءاً واحداً منه، فيجب كونه متّحداً به وأن يكون لذلك الجزء من الاختصاص ما ليس لغيره، وهذا يوجب أن يكون ذلك الجزء هو الشيء الذي يظهر عليه المعجز دون عيسى وأن يكون هو الابن والكلمة دونه وأن يكون هو المعبود المسيح دونه. وفي ذلك إبطال مقاتلتهم، فقد صحّ بهذه الجملة بطلان قولهم بالاتحاد على هذا الوجه.

### فصل: في إبطال قول من قال "اتّحد سبحانه بعيسى عليه السلام بمعنى أنه حلّ فيه"<sup>1</sup>

53. وأمّا القول بأنّه اتّحد بعيسى بمعنى أنّه حلّ فيه فإنّه يبطل بوجوه: منها أن كلّ شيء حلّ في شيء ووُجد فيه بعد أن لم يكن فيه لا يخلو من قسمين، إمّا أن يوجد فيه بأن يحدث كوجود العرض في الجوهر، أو ينتقل إليه كانتقال الجوهر الذي يصير مجاوراً لغيره؛ ولا يعقل سوى هذين. لأنّا قد دللنا على أن الانتقال لا يصحّ على ما لا حيز له، ولا يمكن أن يقال "إنّه ينتقل" و"يحلّ فيه". فإن حصل القديم في عيسى بأن انتقل، اقتضى ذلك كونه جوهرًا. وإن وُجد فيه بأن حلّه وحدث فيه كحلول العرض، فهذا يوجب حدوثه. على

<sup>1</sup>ط: في إبطال قول من ذهب إليه اليعقوبيّة في أنّه جوهر الإله وجوهر الإنسان اتّحدا فصارا جوهرًا واحداً.

because this was the location of the action and not Jesus. Otherwise, if this could happen without uniting with it, then they have to allow it to have happened without uniting with Jesus, and in fact without uniting at all. In this, this teaching is disproved.

Now, he must either have been in adjacency to every atom of Jesus or to some of them. And he could not properly have been in adjacency to all his atoms because this would have necessitated him being many atoms.<sup>151</sup> It has been concluded by evidence that he is one, but it necessitates him being in more than one place at one moment, and this is impossible for anything for which adjacency can happen. If it were not, there would be nothing to prevent a body from being in two places. If he was in adjacency to one atom of him, he must have been united with this, and this atom must have had particular characteristics that others did not. And this means that this atom was the thing through which he made the miracle appear and not Jesus, and that this was the Son and the Word and not him, and that this was the One worshipped, the Christ, and not him.

In this their teaching is disproved, and by all of this the emptiness of their teaching about the uniting in this manner is shown to be right.

*Chapter: On disproving the teaching of the person who says, ‘The blessed One united with Jesus, peace be upon him, in the sense that he inhered within him’*

53. As for the teaching that he united with Jesus in the sense that he inhered within him,<sup>152</sup> it can be disproved in various ways. One of them is that each thing that inheres in a thing and exists within it after not being in it cannot escape from two alternatives: either it exists within it by coming to be, like the existence of an accident in a substance, or it is moved to it, like a substance that comes into adjacency to another is moved; anything other than these two is not rational. Now, we have already proved that being moved cannot apply to what does not have extent, and it cannot be said, ‘He is moved’, and ‘He inheres within it’, for if the eternal One occurred in Jesus by being moved, this would entail his being a substance. And if he existed within him by inhering within him and coming to be in him like the inhering of

<sup>151</sup> It is so unthinkable that God should be composed of atoms like a physical body that ‘Abd al-Jabbār has no need to do more than allude to this.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s introduction, above pp. 232–233, §6.

أن الانتقال إذا استحال عليه، فالحدوث أولى أن يستحيل عليه، لأنّ حدوث الموجود أشدّ استحالة من انتقال ما ليس بجوهر.

54. فإن قيل: "أليس عند شيخكم أبى على أن الكلام يوجد في اللوح واللسان من غير أن ينتقل إليه من مكان آخر أو يحدث؟ وهذا قسم معقول أغفلتموه، فجوزوا أن يتحد القديم تعالى بيسى على هذا الوجه، ولا يمكنكم دفع ذلك بأنكم لا تقولون به، لأنّ ذلك لا يُخرج هذا القول من أن يكون معقولاً"؛ قيل له: إن الكلام عنده يستحيل حصوله إلّا في محلّ، ويقول إنّ يحصل فيه بمعنى هو الصوت أو الكتابة أو الحفظ عنده، فلو كان القديم تعالى يحلّ في عيسى على هذا الوجه، لاستحال خلوه من المحلّ، ولم يوجد فيه إلّا لمعنى حادث معه. على أن كلّ شيء يوجد في غيره بعد أن لم يكن فيه لا يخلو من قسمين: أحدهما، كان موجوداً من قبل لا فيه ثمّ صار فيه؛ والآخر، لم يكن موجوداً من قبل أصلاً فحدث فيه. وقد علّم أنّ القديم موجود قبل اتّحاده بيسى، وما كان كذلك فلا يحصل في غيره إلّا بحدوث معنى سواه يقتضى انتقاله إليه وحلوله فيه، كالكلام عند أبى على. فأما أن يحصل في غيره لا

an accident, this would necessitate his being temporal. But if to be moved is impossible for him, to be temporal is even more impossible for him, because to be existent temporally is even more impossible for something that is not a substance than to be moved.

54. If it is said, ‘Does not your master Abū ‘Alī<sup>153</sup> hold that the word exists on the tablet or the tongue without being moved to it from another place or coming into being? You have left this rational alternative out. So allow that the almighty, eternal One united with Jesus in this respect. You cannot lay this aside by not talking about it, because it does not rule this teaching out from being rational’;<sup>154</sup> say to him, In his view it is only possible for a word to occur in a location, and he says that it occurs in it in the sense of being a sound or writing or memorisation of it.<sup>155</sup> So if the almighty, eternal One were to inhere in Jesus in this way, it would be impossible for him not to have a location, and he would only exist in it by a thing that came into existence with him.<sup>156</sup> But each thing that exists in another after not being in it cannot escape from two alternatives, one of which is that it was existent previously when not in it and then it came to it, and the other is that it was not previously existent at all and then it came into being in it. It is known that the eternal One was existent before his uniting with Jesus, and what is thus does not occur in another except by the coming into being of a determinant different from it that gives rise to its moving to it and its inhering in it, like the word in Abū ‘Alī’s view.<sup>157</sup> It is inconceivable that it should occur otherwise in something else except through a deter-

<sup>153</sup> Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī.

<sup>154</sup> In Abū ‘Alī’s reported statement, ‘the word’ must be the Qur’ān. Al-Ash‘arī records Abū ‘Alī agreeing with the view of the third/ninth century Mu‘tazilī Abū al-Hudhayl that the Qur’ān is both created on the preserved tablet and can exist where it is memorised, written and heard. Thus the word of God exists in many places, while the Qur’ān itself is not moved; *Maqālāt*, pp. 598.11–599.11 (see further on this Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, pp. 388–390, citing an analysis of Abū ‘Alī’s earlier and later views about the reproduction of God’s speech in *Mughnī*, vol. VII, ch. 21). It is evidently this possibility that the Christian ingeniously employs to explain how God can be both united with Jesus and remain the unchanging eternal Divinity.

<sup>155</sup> Cf al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 599.10.

<sup>156</sup> According to Abū al-Hudhayl and Abū ‘Alī, the word of God in its memorised, written and recited forms is dependent on the physical objects on which it exists; al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, pp. 598.16–599.3.

<sup>157</sup> Like the word of God that becomes writing or recitation, God would have to be affected by an external cause in order to unite with Jesus, which is impossible.

لأجل معنى حادث فمحال. وقد بينّا من قبل أنّه لا يصحّ أن يقال إنّ محلّ فيه على وجه يجب ذلك فيه فيستغنى عن معنى لأجله حلّه، وبسطنا القول فيه.

55. فإن قيل: ”إنا نقول إنّ اتّحد به لا على وجه الحلول ولا على سبيل المجاورة، فلا يبطل قولنا بما ذكرتموه. وهب أنّا قلنا إنّ محلّ فيه، كيف يلزمنا أن نجرّيه مجرى حلول العرض في المحلّ؟ ولم لا يصحّ أن نثبت حالاً فيه على غير هذا الوجه؟ فلا يبطل قولنا بما ذكرتموه؟“ قيل له: إن كون الشيء في غيره لا يصحّ أن يثبت إلّا على وجه معقول، كما أنّ الشيء لا يثبت في نفسه إلّا على وجه معقول، فكما يجب إبطال كلّ قول يوجب إثبات ما لا يُعقل، فكذلك يجب إبطال القول بوجود الشيء في الشيء على وجه لا يُعقل. وقد علّم أنّه لا يصحّ أن يُعقل كون الشيء في غيره إلّا أن يكون ذلك الغير كالطرف له ويكون مجاوراً له أو أن يصير حالاً فيه وحيزه حيزه. وما يذهب إليه شيخنا أبو علي، رحمه الله، في الكلام لا يخرج عن هذا القسم، لأنّه يثبت حالاً في المحلّ، وإن كان يقول إنّ قد يحصل فيه لا بالحدوث. وإذا ثبت ذلك، صحّ ما قلناه من أنّه لا يعقل وجود الشيء في غيره إلّا على هذا الوجه.

56. فإن قيل: ”أليس الشيء قد يحدث في الوقت من غير أن يجاوره أو محلّ فيه، وهذا معقول خارج عن القسمين اللذين ذكرتموهما؟“ قيل له: إن

minant that came into being. And we have shown above that it cannot rightly be said that he inhered within him in respect of this being necessary for him, because he has no need of a determinant through which to inhere within him. We have spoken enough about this.

55. If it is said, ‘We say that he united with him not with respect to inhering nor in the form of adjacency, so our teaching is not disproved by what you have referred to. And even if we said that he inhered in him, why should we be compelled to apply to him the inhering of an accident in a substrate? And why could we not affirm that he inhered in him in a way other than this? So our teaching is not disproved by what you have referred to’; say to this, The existence of a thing in another can only be affirmed in a rational manner, just as a thing can only be affirmed in itself in a rational manner, and just as every statement that necessitates the affirmation of what is not rational must be disproved. Thus, teaching about one thing being in another in a manner that is not rational must be overturned. It is known that the existence of a thing in another cannot be conceived of rationally except by this other being a boundary to it and being adjacent to it, or by it inhering in it and its area being its area. And what our master Abū ‘Alī, may God have mercy on him, thinks about the word does not lie outside this definition, because he affirms that it inheres in a substrate, although he said that it occurred there without coming into being. And if he affirmed this, what we say is correct, that the existence of a thing in another could only be rationally thought of in this way.

56. But if it is said, ‘Cannot a thing come into existence in a moment without anything being adjacent to it or inhering within it? This is something rational that lies outside the two definitions that you have mentioned’;<sup>158</sup> say to this, The thing that comes into being in a moment

---

<sup>158</sup> The Christian opponents compare God’s inhering in Christ with a physical object in the moment it comes into existence, when none of the accidental attributes that give it its qualities have yet become attached to it, and there is only it in the moment of its existence. Since, according to the logic of this system of thinking, each moment of time has its own discrete existence and is almost a physical entity (cf. the different opinions reported by al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 448.1–9), this comparison is not as far fetched as it first appears to be. But it carries no conviction for ‘Abd al-Jabbār. In the example of Zayd’s arrival, he dismissively shows that the reference to the object and its moment is only a manner of speaking that can be expressed in more than one way. But this is obviously not possible for the inhering of God in the human Christ.

الحادث في الوقت ليس له به تعلّق في الحقيقة، وإنّما نقول إنّهُ وُجد فيه بمعنى أنّه حدث معه، وإن كان قد يصحّ وجوده وحدوثه لا فيه، ولذلك قد يقال في وقته إنّهُ حدث فيما جعلناه مؤقتاً به، كما نقول، ”إنّ قدوم زيد وُجد عند طلوع الشمس“، وربما نقول، ”إنّ طلوع الشمس حدث في حال قدوم زيد“، بحسب اختلاف حال من نخاطبه. فليس هذا القسم ممّا قالوه من اتّحاد القديم تعالى بعيسى بسبيل. فلذلك لم ندخله في القسمة، واقتصرنّا بها على الوجهين اللذين ذكرناهما.

وممّا يبيّن صحّة ما ذكرناه أنّ كلّ شيء وُجد في غيره إمّا أن يصير معه في حيّزه أو يصير في حيّز آخر مجاوراً له. فما حصل معه على سبيل المجاورة لا يكون إلّا جوهراً على ما قدمناه، وما حصل في حيّزه لا يكون إلّا حالاً. وخروج الشيء الموجود في الشيء من هذين القسمين لا يُعقل، ولا فصل بين من ادّعى قسماً ثالثاً لذلك وبين من ادّعى رابعاً وخامساً لذلك. والقديم تعالى إذا اتّحد بعيسى ولم يصحّ أن يجاوره، فيجب أن يكون حالاً فيه ويصير في حيّزه، على ما ثبت أنّه لا يُعقل سواه.

فإن قيل: ”أليس قد يوجد العرض مع العرض في المحلّ الواحد لا على هذين الوجهين؟“ قيل له: إن أحدهما لا يكون موجوداً في الآخر، وإنّما يوجدان في غيرهما، فليس لذلك تعلّق بما ذكرناه. ولو كان له به تعلّق لم يؤثر فيه، لأنّهما متى وُجدا في محلّ واحد صار حيّز أحدهما حيّز الآخر.

57. فإن قيل: ”هلاًّ جوزتم أن يتّحد بعيسى لا على هذا الوجه لكن على حسب ما تظهر صورة الإنسان في المرآة المجلوة إذا نظر فيها، أو بحسب ظهور نقش الخاتم في الطينة المطبوعة؟ وذلك وجه معقول لا يرجع به إلى



has in truth nothing attaching to it. And we only say that it exists in it in the sense that it came into being with it, although its existence and coming into being may not be in it, and thus it may be said about its moment that it came into being at the time we mentioned in connection with it. As we say, ‘Zayd’s arrival was at sunrise’, and we might say, ‘Sunrise occurred at the time Zayd arrived’, according to a different way of expressing it. But this alternative is not a possible way in which they can talk about the uniting of the almighty, eternal One with Jesus. And so we have not included it among the alternatives, and we have kept them to the two ways we have mentioned.

What makes clear that what we have mentioned is correct is that everything that exists in another is present either together with it within its area or in another area adjacent to it. And what occurs with it in the form of adjacency can only be a substance, according to what we have said above, and what occurs within its area can only inhere. Any exception to these two alternatives of a thing existing in another is not reasonable, and there is no difference between someone who claims a third alternative to this and someone who claims a fourth and a fifth to it. And if the almighty, eternal One united with Jesus and could not be adjacent to him, he would have to inhere within him and be within his area, according to what has been affirmed that there is no rational alternative.

If it is said, ‘Does not an accident exist with an accident in one substrate not according to these two possibilities?’; say to this, But the one does not exist in the other, for rather they both exist in what is other than both of them, so this has no relevance to what we have mentioned. But if it did have relevance to it, it would have no effect here, because while they both existed in one substrate the area of one would be the area of the other.<sup>159</sup>

57. And if it is said, ‘Why will you not allow that he united with Jesus not in this way but in accordance with the way the form of a human appears in a polished mirror when he looks at it, or in accordance with the appearing of the engraving of a seal in pressed clay? This manner is rational, and it does not involve any recourse to inhering or

---

<sup>159</sup> The Christians continue to search for comparisons to their model of the inhering of the divine in the human. ‘Abd al-Jabbār replies by showing both that this choice is inept and that their grasp on the theory of accidents and their mode of inhering in physical bodies is tenuous.

الحلول والمجاورة.“؛ قيل له: إنّا لا نقول إن صورة الإنسان تظهر في المرأة أو تنطبع فيها أو تتشّبح، لأنّه لو انطبع فيه، لم يخل من أن يكون ذلك المنطبع جوهراً أو عرضاً. وقد علّم أنّه قد يرى في المرأة ما هو أعظم صورة منها، والكبير لا يجوز حصوله في الصغير، وكيف يقال ذلك والإنسان يرى في المرأة وجهه على هيئته، أو وجه غيره من غير أن يخالفه، فكيف يجب أن يجرى ذلك على طريقة واحدة إن لم يكن الذي يراه فيه وجهه في الحقيقة؟ وكيف يصحّ تمثيل ذلك بما يحصل للرجل من الظلّ، وليس الظلّ بأكثر من ستر الشعاع؟ ولذلك يختلف بحسب ما ستره من الشعاع، ولذلك يستر الكثير في أوّل النهار والقليل عند الزوال، وربّما لا يحصل له ظلّ البتّة قبل الزوال. فقد صحّ أن الذي يراه في المرأة هو وجهه في الحقيقة، لكنه رآه بالمرآة وصارت آلة له من حيث لم يصحّ أن يكون وجهه مقابلاً لعينه، واحتاج إلى شيء يصير به وجهه مقابلاً له ويصير في الحكم كأنّه عينه، ولذلك نرى أحداً يفرّج إلى المرأة إذا أراد أن يعرف صورة وجهه، كما يفرّج إلى عينه في رؤية سائر المرئيات. وإذا لم يكن في المرأة صورة منطبعة، لم يصحّ ما شبهوه به في الاتّحاد، ولا في قولهم في التثليث.

58. فأما ظهور نقش الخاتم في الطينة، فهناك عرض يدخل فيه ونقش الخاتم أثرٌ فيه. وذلك أن الناتئ في الخاتم إذا صادف جسماً ليناً انغمس فيه وبقي أثره. فكما تنخفض مواضع منه ترتفع مواضع أخرى، فقد حصل فيه أعراض اختلفت به حاله وإن كان عندهم أن القديم اتّحد بعيسى على هذا الوجه، فيجب أن يصير حالاً فيه، أو يقتضى حلول شيء فيه سواء. فإذا لم يصحّ عندهم القول الثاني وجب الأوّل. فقد صحّ أنّه لا يمكن أن يقال في الاتّحاد إلّا ما ذكرناه وأن إثبات وجه

adjacency’;<sup>160</sup> say to this, We do not say that the form of the human appears in the mirror, or is imprinted or takes form in it. For if it were imprinted in it, this thing imprinted could only be either a substance or an accident. And it is known that he is larger than what he sees in the mirror, and the large cannot occur in the small. And how can this be said when the man sees in the mirror his face according to its shape, or someone else’s face without it being different from him? And how can this happen in the same way unless what he sees in it is his face in reality? And how can this comparison be right when the man is affected by a shadow, which is no more than a covering from light? Thus it changes as he is covered from the light, and thus most of him is covered at the beginning of the day, and a little at the setting of the sun, and maybe he will have no shadow at all before its setting.

It may be right that what he sees in the mirror is his face in reality, but he has seen it in the mirror and this has become a device for him, so it is not really his face that is before his eye. He has need of something by which his face becomes before him, and it will have the status of being his own self, and so we see one of us making use of a mirror if he wishes to know the shape of his face, just as he makes use of his eye in order to see other visible things. And if the shape is not impressed in the mirror, the comparison they make with it regarding the Uniting is not correct, nor regarding their teachings about the Trinity.

58. As for the appearance of the engraving of a seal in clay, this is an accident that enters it, and the engraving is a trace in it. This is, that if the raised parts of the seal come into contact with a soft body they will be pressed into it and a trace of them will remain. So, just as parts of it will be made lower, other parts will be raised up, and so accidents will occur in it to change its condition. If in their view the eternal One united with Jesus in this manner, he would have had to inhere in him, or else something other than him would have had to inhere in him.<sup>161</sup> If the second statement is not correct in their view, the first must apply.

It must be right that what we have mentioned is all that can be mentioned with respect to the Uniting, and that it is not correct or

<sup>160</sup> Cf. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s introduction, pp. 234–235 above, §6.

<sup>161</sup> The first alternative is what ‘Abd al-Jabbār had disproved already in this section, and the second requires an extraneous entity such as an accident that brings about change in the human nature to be involved in the Uniting.

ثالث لا يصحّ ولا يعقل ولا يمكن أن يُقال إنّه يحلّه لا على<sup>1</sup> الوجه المعقول في الحلول، وهو أن يصير في حيّزه، لأنّ ذلك في أنّه لا يعقل بمنزلة ما قدمناه. فقد بطل قول من ادّعى أنّه اتّحد به لا على هذين الوجهين وأنّ ذلك معقول.

59. فإن قيل: "إذا صحّ كون القديم، عزّ وجلّ، موجوداً لا في محلّ، لا على الوجه الذى يوجد عليه الجوهر أو العرض، فجوّزوا لنا كونه موجوداً في عيسى لا بالمجاورة والحلول"؛ قيل له: إنّنا بإثباتنا إيّاه موجوداً لم نخرج به عن حقيقة الموجودات، وإنّنا نفينا عنه صفة منفصلة عن الوجود، وهو كونه مجاوراً أو حالاً لقيام الدلالة على استحالة ذلك فيه. وليس كذلك قولكم، لأنّكم أثبتتموه في غيره لا على الوجه الذى يعقل كون الشئ في غيره، فلا بدّ إذن من أن تثبتوه حالاً فيه أو مجاوراً. ومتى بطل كلا الوجهين، بطل قولهم في الاتّحاد.

60. ومّا يبطل قولهم إنّه اتّحد بمعنى أنّه حلّ فيه أن كلّ شئ وُجد لا في محلّ يستحيل وجوده في محلّ. يدلّ ذلك أنّ الجوهر لما استحال حلوله في المحلّ استحال ذلك فيه على كلّ وجه. ولما صحّ حلول العرض في المحلّ وجب كونه حالاً فيه في كلّ حال، فيجب بطلان قولهم إنّه حلّ في عيسى بعد أن لم يكن حالاً فيه.

<sup>1</sup> م: يحلّه على.

rational to affirm a third way, and it is not possible to say that in the inhering he inhered in him in a way that is not rational, which is that he came within his area. For this cannot be rational according to the position we have set out above. So the statement of the person who claims that he did unite with him but not in these two ways and that this is rational is disproved.<sup>162</sup>

59. If it is said, ‘If it is correct for the eternal One, great and mighty, to be existent without a substrate, not in the way that a substance or accident exists, then allow us to hold that he existed in Jesus without adjacency or inhering’;<sup>163</sup> say to this, When we affirm that he exists, we do not exclude him from what actually applies to existent things, but we only deny him any attribute that is unconnected to existence, such as adjacency or inhering, because of the evidence about the impossibility of this with regard to him. But this is not the case with your teaching, because you affirm that he was in another in a way that is not rational with regard to one thing being in another, so you thus have no alternative to affirming that he inhered in him or was adjacent to him. And when either of the two modes is overturned, so is their teaching about the Uniting.

60. Among the things that disprove their teaching that he united in the sense that he inhered in him is that every thing that exists without a substrate cannot exist in a substrate. What proves this is that since a substance cannot exist in a substrate, this is impossible for it in every respect, and since it is correct that an accident inheres in a substrate, it must inhere in it in every circumstance. So their statement that he inhered in Jesus after not inhering in him is definitely disproved.<sup>164</sup>

<sup>162</sup> Like al-Bāqillānī, above pp. 174–177, §§ 23–24, ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s arguments on these points of the seal and mirror differ entirely from those of the earlier scholar Abū ‘Isā; cf. Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 172–181, §§ 228–229.

<sup>163</sup> The Christians suggest that since God is not a physical substance, his inhering in atoms need not conform to the requirements that govern physical substances. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s retort is that although God is different from physical substances, the action of inhering that the Christians claim can only occur according to physical norms, unless it occurs in a manner that lies outside the rational.

<sup>164</sup> If God had inhered in Jesus, the body of Jesus would have become a substrate for God, meaning that God would have changed from a being subsistent in himself to a being that is borne on another. Such a claim violates the physical laws that govern the kinds of existent entities.

فإن قيل: "لم لا يجوز حلوله فيه بعد أن لم يكن حالاً فيه، ويخالف سائر الأعراس؟" قيل له: لأنه لو حلّ فيه، لم يخلُ من أحد وجهين: إمّا أن يجب حلوله فيه أو يصحّ ذلك فيه ويصحّ خلافه. ولا يمكن أن يقال إن ذلك يجب فيه، لأنّ جسم عيسى مع كونه حيّاً لم يخلّ فيه ثم حلّ فيه عندهم، وصفته واحدة؛ ولأنّه إذا كان باقياً ويصحّ أن يخلّ فيه، فقد جرى مجرى الجوهر الذى فى حال بقائه يصحّ أن يحصل فى جهة مع جواز كونه فى غيرها، ولا يجوز أن يكون حالاً فيه مع جواز أن لا يخلّ، لأن ذلك يوجب كونه حالاً فيه لمعنى. وليس ذلك بمذهب للنصارى، لأنّهم يقولون إن القديم تعالى اتّحد بعيسى، وإنّهما كانا جوهرين وطبيعتين منفصلتين ثم صارا لشخص يحتوى عليهما، ولا يثبتون أمراً ثالثاً.

61. وبعد، فإن ذلك المعنى لا بدّ من أن يكون له به تعلّق، وتعلّقه به لا يخلو من وجوه: إمّا بأن يحلّه، أو يخلّ محله. ولا يجوز أن يحلّه، لأنّه تعالى ليس بمحلّ لغيره ويستحيل ذلك فيه. ولا يجوز أن يخلّ فى محله، لأنّه ليس بأن يوجب كونه فيه أولى من أن يوجب كون غيره فيه، وكان يجب أن يعدم اللاهوت بعدم ذلك المعنى أو يخرج من كونه متّحداً به، ولا معنى يعقل إلّا وقد تقدم واللاهوت متّحد بجسم عيسى.

ولا يصحّ أن يقولوا إنّّه يوجد فيه لأجل الحياة وبعدها يخرج من كونه حالاً فيه، لأن الحياة فيه وفى غيره بمنزلة، فكان يجب أن يجوزوا حلوله فى غيره إن كان لأجلها صحّ أن يخلّ فيه.

وليس يمكنهم أن يجعلوا ذلك المعنى كالصوت عند شيخنا أبى على، رحمه الله، مع الكلام، لأنّ الصوت إنّما يصحّ ذلك فيه عنده لما عقل وثبت عنده

But if it is said, ‘Why could he not have inhered in him after not inhering in him, and be different from all accidents?’; say to this, Because if he inhered in him, one of two eventualities must have applied: he inhered in him necessarily, or this may have been appropriate for him or may have not been. It is not possible to say that he did this necessarily, because while Jesus was alive, he did not, in their view, not inhere in his body and then inhere in it, and his characteristic was one. And since he was continuing and he did rightly inhere in him, then he must have been equivalent to a substance which when it continues it can appropriately exist in a manner and may also possibly be in another. And it is not possible for him to be inhering in him together with the possibility of him not inhering, because this would require him to be inhering in him through a determinant.<sup>165</sup> And this is not the belief of the Christians, because they say that the almighty, eternal One united with Jesus, and that they were two separate substances and natures and then they became an individual being that comprised them both. And they do not affirm a third possibility.

61. Furthermore, this determinant would have to belong to him and be attached to him, and be attached to him in a set number of ways: either by inhering in him or inhering in his substrate. It could not properly inhere in him because the Almighty is not a substrate for another, and this is impossible with respect to him. And it could not properly inhere in his substrate, because there is no more reason for it to be in this than for another to be in it, and the divine nature would have had to be non-existent because of the non-existence of this determinant, or stop being united with him. And no determinant can be understood except in the way that has been set out, and the divine nature was united with the body of Jesus.

They cannot rightly say that he existed in him because of life, and ceased to be inhering in him by its extinction, because life is the same in him as in others, so they would have to allow him to inhere in others if it was because of this that he inhered in him. And they cannot suggest that this determinant is like a sound with speech, as is the view of our master Abū ‘Alī, may God have mercy on him, because a sound would

---

<sup>165</sup> The change from not inhering to inhering could only come about by means of an external cause. But apart from it being impossible for God to be affected by a cause, it would mean the presence of a third reality in the united Jesus, though Christians only allow for the divine and human natures.

حاجة الكلام إليه. وليس يمكنهم إثبات جنس يحتاج اللاهوت إليه. ومما يبطل هذا القول أن اللاهوت لو حلّ في الناسوت لوجب أن يحصل لذلك المحلّ تأثير لم يكن له من قبل، إمّا بأن يفصل من غيره بالإدراك أو تحصل حال لم تكن كما نقوله في سائر المعانى الحالة. فإن قالوا: "يحصل له تأثير في المحلّ وهو أنّه يصير ممّن يصحّ منه الفعل اللاهوتى ولم يكن يصحّ ذلك منه من قبل"؛ قيل له: هذا يوجب كون اللاهوت قدرة عند وجوده صار المحلّ قادراً على ما لم يكن قادراً عليه، وصحّ منه ما لم يصحّ منه من قبل. وفي بطلان ذلك دلالة على بطلان هذا القول.

62. على أن اللاهوت لو حلّ في عيسى، لوجب أن لا يخرج من أن يكون حالاً فيه إلّا ببطلانه، لأنّ كلّ شيء حصل في غيره فلا يجوز أن يخرج من كونه حاصلاً فيه إلّا بانتقال أو بطلان ما به يوجد. ومتى كان ذلك الشيء ممّا يستحيل انتقاله، وكان ممّا يبقى، فإنّما يخرج عن المحلّ إمّا ببطلانه أو ببطلان ما يحتاج إليه. فلو حلّ اللاهوت في الناسوت وقد علّم أن الناسوت قد يموت وقد يبطل، فلا بدّ من خروجه من أن يكون فيه، فيجب أن لا يخرج عنه إلّا بضدّ ينفيه أو ببطلان ما يحتاج إليه فيتنفى عنه،<sup>1</sup> أو يخرج من أن يكون موجوداً فيه ببطلان ما يحتاج إليه، وإن لم يعدم كالكلام عند أبى على.

<sup>1</sup>ط: عنده.



only be right in him, in his view, if he was rational and it could be confirmed that he had the prerequisite for speech. And they are not able to affirm a kind of which the divine nature has need.<sup>166</sup>

Among the things that prove this teaching false is that if the divine nature inhered in the human nature then there must have been some effect in this substrate that it did not have beforehand, either by being tangibly distinguished from others, or by the occurrence of a condition that had not been, as we talk about in the case of other things that inhere. So if they say, ‘An effect did occur in the substrate, which is that he became one who could perform divine actions, and he could not do this previously’; say to this, This requires the divine nature to be power, through the existence of which the substrate became powerful over what it had not been powerful over, and things could arise from it that had never come from it previously. In showing that this is false is proof for showing this teaching is false.<sup>167</sup>

62. However, if the divine nature had inhered in Jesus, then it could not have ceased to inhere within him except by his extinction, because each thing that occurs in another can only properly cease to occur in it by being removed, or the extinction of what it exists in. But in the circumstance that this thing is such that it is impossible for it to be removed, and is such that it remains permanent, then it can only cease to be in the substrate either by its extinction or by the extinction of what it was dependent upon. So if the divine nature inhered in the human nature, and it was known that the human nature might die or be extinguished so that it would have to cease to be in it, then it could only cease to be in it by some opposite that removed it, or by the extinction of what it depended upon so that it was removed from it, or it would cease to exist in it by the extinction of what it depended upon

---

<sup>166</sup> In the continuing examination of ways in which the divine could inhere in the human Jesus, ‘Abd al-Jabbār excludes further possibilities, among them that the cause that governed the inhering of the divine could be Jesus’ attribute of life, because all other humans have this attribute and so the inhering in him could not be unique, and that the sound that causes speech to be heard can be brought in as an analogy, because God would then be required to have the capacity of making sounds.

These points may not carry much weight, but they show how deeply some Christians had studied the possibilities of the *kalām* in order to find ways of explaining and defending this Christological model.

<sup>167</sup> The Christians claim that the divine nature that was involved in the act of uniting was the knowledge or Word of God.

وكلّ ذلك فاسد، لأنّه يوجب جواز العدم عليه أو حاجته إلى معنى به يوجد في الناسوت.

فإن قيل: ”إنّه وإن حلّ في الناسوت وصحّ أن يخرج عنه فإنّه لا يحتاج إلى ما ذكرتم في خروجه عنه لأنّه يجب أن يخرج عنه في حال صحّة خروجه عنه“؛ قيل له: إنّ جسم الناسوت قد علّم أنّه يصحّ أنّه يحلّ فيه اللاهوت في أيّ حال كان فيها حيّاً، ولا حال حيّ فيها إلّا ويجوز أن لا يحيى، فيجب جواز وجوده فيه في حال كان يجوز أن لا يوجد. وهذا يوجب أن لا يخرج عنه إلّا على الوجه التي ذكرناها.

على أن اللاهوت لو حلّ في الناسوت لم يخل من أن يحلّ فيه في جزء منه، ويكون هو الإنسان في الحقيقة، على ما قاله معمر، أو يثبتون الناسوت الجسم المشاهد. ثم لا يخلو قولهم فيه من وجهين: إمّا أن يقولوا إنّ حلّ في كلّ جزء منه، وإن كان اللاهوت واحداً، أو حلّ في جزء واحد منه ويثبتون اللاهوت أجزاء بعدد الناسوت يحلّ كلّ جزء منه في جزء. ولا يمكن أن يقال إنّ كلّ

although it did not become non-existent, like the word in the view of Abū ‘Alī.<sup>168</sup> All this is wrong, because it entails allowing it to be non-existent or to have need of a determinant through which it existed in the human nature.<sup>169</sup>

If it is said, ‘Although it inhered in the human nature and it could appropriately leave it, it did not have need of what you mention when it ceased to be in it,<sup>170</sup> because it must have left it at a moment when its departure from it was appropriate’; say to this, It is known that the divine nature appropriately inhered in the body of the human nature in every circumstance in which it was living. And there was no circumstance in which it was living when it could not have been living, so that it would have had to be existing in it at a moment when it might not have been existing. This requires that it could only have ceased to be in it according to the modes we have mentioned.<sup>171</sup>

However, if the divine nature inhered in the human nature, then it can only have inhered in an atom of it, and this would really have been the human being, according to what Mu‘ammar taught,<sup>172</sup> or else they must affirm that the human nature was the visible body. Then their teaching about it could only follow two alternatives: either to say that it inhered in every atom of it, even though the divine nature was one; or it inhered in an atom of it, and to affirm that the divine nature was the same number of atoms as the human nature and each atom of

<sup>168</sup> According to Abū al-Hudhayl, with whom Abū ‘Alī agreed, the word of God, unlike the Qur’ān itself, might appear in many places, such as a writing surface or the memory, and would be extinguished together with these; cf. al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, pp. 598.16–599.5, and p. 323, nn. 154–156 above.

<sup>169</sup> In rejecting the alternatives he has set out, ‘Abd al-Jabbār appears to ignore the last, that the divine nature might cease to inhere in the human nature but would not become extinct.

<sup>170</sup> This would be the determinant mentioned above that would cause the severance of the divine and human natures. The Christians argue that there was no need for this because the separation occurred at the ‘appropriate’ time of the human nature’s death.

<sup>171</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār argues that since the divine nature inhered in Christ in all circumstances when he was alive, it could only be severed from him in the ways he has just itemised.

The broader point being made in these detailed arguments is that the divine nature must have conformed to the same constraints as contingent entities, which is a contradiction of its being.

<sup>172</sup> The third/ninth century Mu‘tazilī Mu‘ammar Ibn ‘Abbād al-Sulamī (d. 215/830) taught that the true human was an atom, *juz’ lā yatajazza’*, that was not subject to physical restrictions, and that the visible body was its instrument; cf. al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, pp. 318.3–5, 331.13–332.3, and also J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*, vol. 3, Berlin, 1992, pp. 83–87.

جزء من اللاهوت اتّحد بكلّ جزء من الناسوت لأنّ ذلك يوجب كون الإله أجزاء كثيرة بعدد أجزاء الناسوت أو إثبات آلهة كثيرة، وكلاهما فاسد. وليس ذلك ممّا يذهب إليه النصارى، لأنّهم يقولون إنّ جوهر واحد ثلاثة أقانيم، ولا يجعلونه أجزاء كثيرة بعدد أجزاء الناسوت.

63. ولا يمكن أن يقال إنّّه يحلّ في جزء واحد من عيسى وهو الإنسان، لأنّ الدلالة قد دلّت على أن الإنسان الحيّ هو الجملة دون الجزء الواحد على ما ندلّ عليه من بعد، ولأنّ عندهم أن طريق الاتّحاد ظهور الفعل الإلهي منه، وذلك ظهور من جملة عيسى دون جزء من القلب، فلا يصحّ أن يعلقوا الاتّحاد به.

ولا يمكنهم أن يقولوا: إنّّه يتّحد بجزء منه، وإن كان الإنسان هو الجملة، لأنّه كان يجب أن يعرف مكانه ويفصل بينه وبين غيره ويظهر الفعل اللاهوتي منه لا من الجملة، وكان يجب أن يكون ذلك الجزء هو المسيح القادر الفاعل المعبود عندهم، وأن لا يقال إن اللاهوت اتّحد بعيسى، بل يجب أن يقال اتّحد بجزء منه. وكيف يصحّ أن يتّحد بجزء منه دون جزء؟ ولم صار بعض أجزائه بذلك أوّل من بعض؟

وليس لأحد أن يقول: "إنّه يحلّ في جزء منه وجملة عيسى هي الموصوفة به، كقولهم في المعاني التي توجب الحكم للجملة." وذلك أن الاتّحاد الذي يثبتونه يرجع إلى وجود اللاهوت في الناسوت فقط، لا أنّهم يثبتون للناسوت حالاً موجبة عن اللاهوت فيجب أن يكون حكمه مقصوراً على محلّه، وأن يفارق ما نقوله في المعاني المتعلقة بالجملة.

it inhered in an atom. It is not possible to say that each atom of the divine nature united with each atom of the human nature, because this requires the Divinity to be numerous atoms according to the number of atoms of the human nature, or to affirm many divinities. And either of these is false. But this is not what the Christians believe, because they say that he is one substance and three hypostases, and they do not suggest he is numerous atoms according to the number of atoms in the human nature.

63. It is not possible to say that it inhered in one atom of Jesus and this was the human being, because evidence shows that the living human is the totality and not one atom, as we will show below.<sup>173</sup> And since in their view the mode of uniting was the appearance of divine action from him, and this was an appearance from the totality of Jesus and not an atom of the heart, they cannot properly attach the Uniting to it.

And they cannot say that it united with an atom from him, although the human was the totality, because it would have had to find out its location and distinguish between it and others, and make divine action appear from it and not from the totality. And this atom would have had to be Christ, the powerful, acting one, and, in their view, the one worshipped, and it could not be said that the divine nature united with Jesus but that it united with an atom of him. But how can it be that it should have united with one atom from him and not another? And why should some of his atoms be like this and not others?

No one may say, ‘It inhered in an atom of him and the totality of Jesus was qualified by it, like their teaching about determinants that endow status upon the totality.’<sup>174</sup> This is because the uniting which they affirm is in essence nothing more than the existing of the divine nature in the human nature, and because they do not affirm that the human nature had a condition affected by the divine nature so that its status had to be limited to a substrate for it, and that it was different from what we say about the determinants that are attached to the totality.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. the last paragraph of § 64.

<sup>174</sup> The Christian opponents employ the Muslim concept that a determinant attribute such as knowledge might inhere in only one part of the total being but would render the whole of it knowing.

‘Abd al-Jabbār exposes the fallacy in this comparison by showing that while for the Christians the divine nature united with the entire human nature of Christ, according to this model the human nature would be affected by the inhering of the divine nature in part of Christ. The two models are significantly different.

ولا يمكنهم أن يقولوا إن اللاهوت شيء واحد ويتحد بجميع أجزاء عيسى، لأن كل شيء حل في غيره يستحيل أن يحل في غيره حتى يحل المعنى الواحد المحال الكثيرة من غير أن يوجب كون المحال مؤتلفة، وإنما يجوز عندنا حلول التأليف في محلين لأنه لجنسه يوجب ائتلافهما، وذلك يحل وجوده في محل واحد، وذلك لا يصح في اللاهوت. فيجب أن يكون كسائر الأعراض في أنه لا يصح حلوله إن حل في غيره إلا في محل واحد.

64. فإن قيل: "أليس عند شيخكم أبي على يجوز حلول الكلام في محال كثيرة، وإن كان معنى واحداً؟ فجوزوا حلول مثله في حلول اللاهوت في كل أجزاء الناسوت"؛ قيل له: إن ما ذكرته مما لا نقول به، والدلالة قد دلت على خلافه، وما به نبطله مثل الذى أبطلنا به هذا القول، فالاعتراض به لا يصح. وبعد، فإنما صح ذلك عنده في الكلام لأنه يثبت وجوداً في المحال بغيره، ولا يصح ذلك في حلول اللاهوت، فبطل تشبيهه به.

فإن قيل على الوجه الأول: أليس أجزاء الناسوت كلها ناسوت واحد، فهلاً صح أن يحل في كل جزء منه جزء من اللاهوت وتكون جملة إلهاً واحداً؟ قيل له: إن ذلك إنما صح في الإنسان لأنه يصير حياً بحياة تحتاج إلى بنية فيصير المبنى<sup>1</sup> بما فيه من الحياة كالشيء الواحد. ولا يصح ذلك في أجزاء اللاهوت، لو كان ذلك بأجزاء كثيرة، لأن بعضه في حكم المنفصل من بعض لاستحالة البنية عليه، ولأن وصف الإله بأنه قادر يرجع إلى ذاته، وصفات

<sup>1</sup> م: الشيء.

They cannot say that the divine nature was one thing and it united with all the atoms of Jesus, because all things that inhere in others cannot inhere in the other in the manner of the one entity inhering in many substrates without the substrates having to be in joined. In our view, inhering in a combination is only appropriate in two substrates, because by its kind it entails them being joined, and this changes its existence into one substrate. But this is not right for the divine nature. So it must be like all accidents, in that if it inheres in another, inhering is only right in one substrate.

64. If it is said, ‘Does not your master Abū ‘Alī sanction the word inhering in many substrates, even though it is one entity? So allow an inhering like it in the inhering of the divine nature in every atom of the human nature’;<sup>175</sup> say to this, What you refer to is not what we say, and evidence points to the opposite of it. And what we would disprove it with is like what we have disproved this teaching with, so objecting by using this is not right.<sup>176</sup> And furthermore, this is only right in his view with regard to the word, because he affirms that it exists in substrates other than it. This is not right in the case of the inhering of the divine nature, so his comparison with it is disproved.

If with regard to the first point<sup>177</sup> it is said, ‘Are not all the atoms of the human nature one human nature, so why is it not right for an atom of the divine nature to inhere in an atom of it, and for its totality to be one Divinity?’; say to this, This is only right in the case of a human, because he becomes living by life having need of a structure, so that it becomes a form through life being in it, as though it is a single thing. But this is not right in the case of the atoms of the divine nature, if this were to comprise many atoms, since one part of it would have the status of being separated from another, because structure is impossible for it, and because the characterisation of the Divinity as powerful derives from his essence. Essential attributes would particularise each atom of

---

<sup>175</sup> The Christians evidently think that Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī’s teaching about the existence of the Qur’ān in many different forms, even though it remains one Qur’ān, has much promise as an analogy for their own Christological model of inhering, and they return to it another time.

<sup>176</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s reply has an oblique character that suggests he may not be entirely at ease with it, maybe because he did not accept Abū ‘Alī’s position. Cf. Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, pp. 388–390.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. §63 above.

الذات تختصّ كلّ جزء منه دون جملته وتفارق صفات المعانى. وذلك يسقط هذا السؤال.

65. على أنّه لو حلّ تعالى في عيسى وصحّ ذلك فيه، لكان طريق صحّته ظهور الفعل الإلهى منه. وهذا لا يوجب اتّحاده به، لأنّه لا يفعل بالاعتماد والحركة، وإنّما يخترع الفعل اختراعاً كخلقه الأجسام وغيرها، لأنّه قادر لنفسه وتفارق حاله حال القادر بقدرة المحتاج في الفعل إلى استعمال محلّ القدرة. فإذا صحّ ذلك لم يمتنع أن يظهر الفعل على يد عيسى أو عند قوله، وإن لم يكن متّحداً به. وبعد، فما يثبتونه لأجله متّحداً بعيسى يوجب عليهم كونه متّحداً بسائر الأنبياء لظهور الفعل الإلهى عند قولهم وادعائهم. وفي هذا إبطال تخصيص عيسى بالاتّحاد على ما يذهبون إليه.

على أن اللاهوت لو صحّ أن يحلّ في جسم عيسى، لجاز أن يحلّ في الجهاد. ولا طريق به يحيلون حلوله في الجهاد إلّا ويجب أن يستحيل لأجله حلوله في جسم عيسى. لأنّهم إن قالوا: ”إنّ من حقّه أن لا يحلّ إلّا في محلّ فيه حياة كالعلم“، لزعمهم استحالة وجود ذاته إلّا في محلّ فيه حياة كالعلم. فإن قالوا: ”إنّه إذا حلّ في الجهاد لم تظهر له أفعال إلهية، وليس كذلك إذا حلّ في حى“؛ قيل لهم: إذا صحّ أن يفعل الفعل الإلهى فيما يأتى عنه، فهلاًّ جاز



it<sup>178</sup> and not the totality of it, and would be distinct from the accidental attributes.<sup>179</sup> This silences this matter.

65. However, if the Almighty had inhered in Jesus and this was appropriate for him, then the mode of its being appropriate would be the appearance from him of divine action. But this does not necessitate uniting with him, because he does not act by dependence or movement, but rather he gives complete origin to an action, like his creating bodies and other things. For he is powerful of himself, and his condition is distinct from that of a being who is powerful by power, which has to make use of the substrate of power for an action. If this is right, there is no reason why he should not have made an action appear through Jesus or when he spoke, even though he was not united with him. And furthermore, the reason by which they affirm that he was united with Jesus compels them to accept that he was united with other prophets because of the appearance of divine action when they spoke and prayed. In this, any particular uniting for Jesus is proved false, according to the way they believe it.

However, if the divine nature was ever able to inhere in the body of Jesus, then it would be possible for it to inhere in an inanimate body. And they have no way of avoiding its inhering in an inanimate body, unless on account of this is it is impossible for it to inhere in the body of Jesus. For if they say, ‘It is of its reality only to inhere in a substrate in which is life, just like knowledge’,<sup>180</sup> they have to accept the impossibility of his essence existing except in a substrate in which is life, just like knowledge. So if they say, ‘If it inhered in an inanimate body, divine actions would not appear in it, but it is not like this if it inheres in a living thing’, say to them, If it is able to perform divine

<sup>178</sup> This is the human nature of Christ.

<sup>179</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s point appears to be that since the divine nature is not a restricted physical body it cannot be regarded in the same way as them, and there cannot be any idea that if one of its atoms (allowing that it could ever be comprised of atoms) inhered in an atom of the human nature then all the others would. In addition, God’s qualities are unlike the physical attributes of contingent beings, and cannot be thought to qualify a composite being in its totality.

<sup>180</sup> According to the logic of the *kalām*, the precondition for a contingent being to know, and thus to be qualified by an attribute of knowledge, is that it should be living, qualified by an attribute of life. As ‘Abd al-Jabbār goes on to show, the distinction made by the Christians is arbitrary because it presumes that God cannot work through inanimate things.

أنَّ يحلَّ في جهاد، ويخترع على يد عيسى وعند قوله الأفعال الإلهية؟ فإذا جاز وجوده فيما لم يزل، وإن لم يظهر منه فعل إلهي، فهلاًَّ جاز أن يوجد في الجهاد ولا يظهر منه ذلك؟ وفي ذلك صحّة ما ألزمنهم من إيجاب كونه متّحداً بالجهاد وصحّة ذلك فيه.<sup>2</sup> وفي ذلك إبطال ما يدعونه من اختصاص عيسى بذلك.

ويجب على هذه الطريقة أن يجوزوا حلوله في كلّ حيّ على الطريقة التي ألزمنهم، بل يجب أن يجوزوا حلوله في المحال التي حلّت بها الأفعال الإلهية لأنّها بها أخصّ، من حيث وجد فعله فيه. فقد صحّ بهذه الجملة بطلان قولهم بأنّه اتّحد بعيسى على سبيل الحلول.

### فصل: في إبطال قول من ذهب إليه من اليعقوبية في أنّ جوهر الإله وجوهر الإنسان اتّحدا فصارا جوهرًا واحدًا

66. وأمّا ما ذهب إليه أكثر اليعقوبية من أنّ جوهر الإله وجوهر الإنسان اتّحدا فصارا جوهرًا واحدًا أقنومًا واحدًا طبيعة واحدة فباطل، لأنّ الشيئين يستحيل أن يصيرا شيئًا واحدًا في الحقيقة، كما يستحيل أن يصير الشيء الواحد شيئين. وقد بيّنّا في باب قبل هذا أن الشيء الواحد يستحيل أن يصير أشياء، وذلك يوجب استحالة كون الشيئين شيئًا واحدًا. على أن اللاهوت لو جاز أن يتّحد بالناسوت ويصير شيئًا واحدًا، لجاز أن يصير الجوهران بالمجاورة جوهرًا واحدًا، أو العرض بحلوله في الجوهر مع العرض شيئًا واحدًا، أو الأعراض باجتماعها<sup>3</sup> في المحلّ الواحد تصير شيئًا واحدًا. فإذا بطل ذلك، ولم يؤثر تعلّق الشيء بغيره في هذا الباب على اختلاف وجوه التعلّق فيه، بطل القول بأنّ اللاهوت باتّحاده بالناسوت

<sup>1</sup> م: ولم يظهر. <sup>2</sup> م: منه. <sup>3</sup> م: بأجناسها.

actions according to what is said about it, then why can it not inhere in an inanimate thing, when it originates divine actions through Jesus and when he speaks? For if it could be existent in what is eternal, even though it does not make divine action appear from it, then why can it not exist in an inanimate body and not make this appear from it? This shows that what we have compelled them to accept about it having to be united with an inanimate body is right, and that it can do this. And this shows the emptiness of what they claim about Jesus being unique in this.

According to this method, they have to agree to its<sup>181</sup> inhering in every living thing, according to the method we have forced them to acknowledge. And moreover, they have to agree to its inhering in substrates in which divine actions inhere because it makes these particularly special, in as much as its action exists there.

Through all of this the falseness of their teaching that it united with Jesus in the manner of inhering is proved right.

*Chapter: On disproving the teaching of those Jacobites  
who believe that the substance of the Divinity and the  
substance of the human united and became one substance*

66. As for what the majority of the Jacobites believe, that the substance of the Divinity and the substance of the human united and became one substance, one hypostasis and one nature,<sup>182</sup> this is false because two things cannot become one thing in reality, just as one thing cannot become two things. We have already shown in a previous section that it is impossible for one thing to become many things,<sup>183</sup> and this entails the impossibility of two things being one thing.

However, if the divine nature could ever unite with the human nature and become one thing, then two substances could become one substance through adjacency, or one accident with another a single thing through its inhering in a substance, or accidents could become one thing by their grouping together in one substrate. So if this is false, and the attaching of a thing to another in this respect has no effect different from the ways of attaching in it, the teaching that the

<sup>181</sup> This is the divine nature.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s introduction, above pp. 234–235, §6.

<sup>183</sup> This would have been demonstrated in one of the lost early parts of the *Mughnī*.

صارا شيئاً واحداً. وبعد، فلو جاز ما قالوه لوجب أن يستحيل الموت على الناسوت إذا صار باتّحاد اللاهوت به شيئاً واحداً، وخرج عن طبيعته الناسوتية، وجواز الموت عليه ممّا يختصّ به الناسوت. وبعد، فيجب على قولهم أن يستحيل على المسيح، بعد الاتّحاد، كلّ صفة تختصّ الإنسان وكلّ فعل لا يجوز إلّا عليه، نحو الأكل والشرب والصلب والقتل والطول والعرض والعمق والحركة والزوال، لأنّه بالاتّحاد قد خرج عن طبيعته الناسوتية وجوهرها، وإلّا لم يكن لقولهم إنّ صار باتّحاد اللاهوت به شيئاً واحداً، مع أن حاله على ما كان عليه، معنى ولا فائدة. وبعد، فيجب على هذا القول أن يكون المسيح قد صار بعد ما كان محدثاً قديماً باتّحاد اللاهوت به. ويستحيل أن يصير المحدث قديماً، كما يستحيل أن يصير القديم محدثاً، بل ذلك في المحدث أشد استحالة لأن ما وُجد بعد أن لم يكن لا يجوز أن يصير موجوداً لم يزل، لأنّ ذلك يوجب وجوده في حال قد ثبت عدمه، وذلك يستحيل فيه. فإذا استحال ذلك، لم يخرج عن الاستحالة إلى الصحة موجود معنى ولا عدمه ولا باتّحاد ولا غيره، كما لا تصحّ الأمور التي ثبتت استحالتها لعارض ومعنى.

67. على أن اللاهوت إذا اتّحد بالناسوت فلا يخلو إذا صار شيئاً واحداً من وجوه: إمّا أن يكون ذلك الواحد بصفة اللاهوت وخرج عن صفة الناسوتية، أو بصفة الناسوت وخرج عن صفة اللاهوتية، أو يختصّ بكلّ الصفتين. فإن كان بصفة اللاهوت فيجب أن يستحيل على المسيح سائر ما يختصّ به الناسوت من الرؤية والطول وسائر ما هو عليه من الصفات والأكل والشرب والقتل والصلب. وفي ذلك خروج عن مذهبهم، لأنّهم يقرّون بأن عيسى كان بعد البنوة والاتّحاد يشاهد على ما كان من قبل أكلاً وشارباً، ويثبتون الصلب والقتل فيه بعد ذلك، وإن اختلفوا في ذلك الصلب

divine nature and the human nature became one thing by uniting is disproved. Furthermore, if what they teach were allowed, then death would have had to be impossible for the human nature since through the uniting of the divine nature with it, it would have become one thing, and it would have ceased to have the nature of humanity or to be susceptible to death, which is particular to the human nature. In addition, according to their teaching, after the Uniting every attribute that particularised the human being and every action that was possible for him alone, such as eating, drinking, crucifixion, being killed, height, breadth, depth, movement and ending, would have to be impossible for Christ, because through the Uniting he would have ceased to have the nature and substance of humanity. Otherwise, their teaching that through the uniting of the divine nature with him he had become one thing, although his condition remained what it had been, would have no meaning or purpose. In addition, according to this teaching Christ would have had to become eternal after being temporal through the uniting of the divine nature with him. But it is impossible for the temporal to become eternal, just as it is impossible for the eternal to become temporal, though it is more so for the temporal, for what exists after not being cannot become eternally existent, because this necessitates its being existent in a condition when its non-existence is asserted, and this is impossible for it. So if this is impossible, the existence of a thing and not its non-existence either by uniting or otherwise does not cease to be impossible and become correct, just as matters concerning accidents and things which I have asserted to be impossible do not become correct.

67. However, if the divine nature united with the human nature, then if they became one thing, they could not escape alternatives: either this one would have the attribute of the divine nature and would not be included in the attribute of humanity, or it and the attribute of the human nature would not be included in the attribute of divinity, or it would be particularised by both attributes. If it had the attribute of the divine nature, then all that by which the human nature is particularised, such as visibility, height and all the attributes it entails, eating, drinking, being killed and crucifixion, would have to be impossible for Christ. And this means a departure from their faith, because they declare that after the Sonship and Uniting Jesus was still witnessed eating and drinking as he had done before, and they assert that he was crucified and killed after this, although they differ over the crucifixion, whether

أنّه متعلّق باللاهوت أو الناسوت. وإن كان بصفة الناسوت وخرج عن صفة اللاهوت بالاتّحاد، فيجب أن لا يظهر منه فعل إلهي، وأن يكون حكم المسيح بعد الاتّحاد كحكمه من قبل، وأن تكون حاله وحال غيره سواء، ويجب أن يكون الإله قد بطل وخرج عن صفاته بالاتّحاد، وأن يكون ذلك بمنزلة عدمه. وفي ذلك جواز العدم على القديم تعالى أو على الابن عندهم، وكلاهما سواء في الاستحالة كما يستحيل عدمه. فكذلك يستحيل أن يصير أقنومين بعد ما كان ثلاثة أقانيم، ويوجب ذلك أن يصير القديم محدثاً إن لم يعدم، وأن يخرج عن صفاته النفسية، وأن يستحيل ظهور المعجزات على يد عيسى لأنّه قد خرج عن طبيعته اللاهوتية وإن كان بالاتّحاد صاراً شيئاً واحداً، وذلك الشيء يختصّ بصفة الناسوت واللاهوت. فلم صار بأن يكون شيئاً واحداً أوّلى من أن يكونا شيئين كما كانا، لأنّه لا وجه يقال لأجله إن المسيح جوهران وطبيعتان بعد الاتّحاد إلّا وهو قائم في هذا القول؟ فيجب أن لا يصحّ قولهم إنّهما صاراً شيئاً واحداً.

68. على أن من<sup>1</sup> قول بعضهم إنّ عيسى يموت في الحقيقة، وإذا مات خرج اللاهوت من أن يكون متّحداً به، وذلك يوجب كونه غيراً له لجواز انفراده عنه عند موته، وهذا علامة التغير.<sup>2</sup> على أن هذا القول يوجب عليهم أن عيسى إذا مات أن<sup>3</sup> نفى خلق نفسه إن كان بالاتّحاد قد صار هو اللاهوت، بل يوجب أن يكون اللاهوت يجوز<sup>4</sup> الموت عليه والفناء، إن كان بالاتّحاد قد صار والناسوت شيئاً واحداً. على أن هذا القول يوجب أن يكون الإله هو الذي صلب وقتل. ولو صحّ ذلك عليه لصحّ عليه جميع الآلام، ولصحّ عليه سائر ما يجوز على الأجسام المحدثّة. وبعد، فإذا جاز بعد الاتّحاد أن

<sup>1</sup>م: على أن قول. <sup>2</sup>م: التغير. <sup>3</sup>ط: أو. <sup>4</sup>م: أن يكون اللاهوت هو الذي صلب وقتل.

it affected the divine nature or the human nature.<sup>184</sup> And if he had the attribute of the human nature by the Uniting and was not included in the attribute of the divine nature, then no divine action could have appeared from him, and the status of Christ after the Uniting was like his status before, and his condition and that of others was the same; the Divinity would have been cancelled out by the Uniting and ceased to have its attributes, though this is equivalent to its being non-existent. This means sanctioning non-existence for the almighty eternal One, or as they hold for the Son. Both of these are equally impossible, for just as it is impossible for the substance of the eternal One to be non-existent, so it is impossible for it to become two hypostases after being three hypostases. This requires the eternal One to become temporal, if he does not become non-existent, and to cease to have the attributes of his own being, and for the appearance of miracles through Jesus to be impossible because he has ceased to have his nature of divinity, even though the two became one thing through the Uniting, and this thing was particularised by the attribute of the human nature and divine nature. But why should it have become one thing rather than being two things as they had been, because in this teaching there is no reason for saying that Christ was two substances and natures after the Uniting unless this was obvious? So it follows that their teaching that the two became one thing is incorrect.

68. However, it is the teaching of some of them that Jesus died in reality, and when he died the divine nature ceased to be united with him. This requires it to have been other than him if it could be separated from him when he died, and this is a sign of difference. But this teaching requires them to accept that when Jesus died he denied his own character if it had become the divine nature by the Uniting. And furthermore it requires death and extinction to be possible for the divine nature, if by the Uniting it and the human nature became one thing. But this teaching requires the Divinity to be the one who was crucified and killed. And if this could be right for him, then all the sufferings could be right for him, and all that is possible for temporal bodies could be right for him. In addition, if after the Uniting Christ

---

<sup>184</sup> Cf. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s introduction, above pp. 236–237, §8, where in the last paragraph refers to unnamed groups among the Jacobites who hold such a view. They may be Julianists, followers of Julian of Halicarnassus, who are named a little later in §78.

يكون المسيح قد صار إلهًا قديمًا، فما الذى به يعلم حدوث الأجسام، لأنّه متى جوّز على الشىء منها أن يكون قديمًا، فقد بطل الطريق الذى تثبت الأجسام لأجله محدثة، وفي هذا إبطال طريق معرفة الإله أصلاً، فضلاً عن أن يقال إنّه ممّن يجوز عليه الاتّحاد أو لا يجوز ذلك عليه.

69. على أنّه يلزم الجميع على قولهم بالاتّحاد أن يكون المتّحد بعيسى هو الإله الذى هو الجوهر الواحد دون أقنوم الابن والكلمة، لأن الطريق الذى به يشبّون الاتّحاد من ظهور الفعل اللاهوتى منه يوجب عليهم ذلك، إلّا أن يقولوا إنّ كلّ واحد من الأقانيم فى الحقيقة إله، ويتركوا أصل مقالتهم، ويكلّمون إذ ذاك بما أبطلنا به قول من قال بأنّ مع الله تعالى ثان قادر لنفسه من دلالة التمانع وغيرها. على أن كلّ شىء حلّ فى شىء فلا بدّ أن يغير حكمه الراجع إليه اعتباراً لسائر المعانى الحالة فى المحلّ ممّا لا يدرك ولا يُحسّ، ولا يجوز أن يوجب حكماً منفصلاً منه، فكان يجب، إن حلّ الابن فى عيسى، أن يوجب له حكماً يختصّه وظهور الفعل اللاهوتى منفصل منه لا يجوز أن يكون موجّباً له. وإنّما نقول إن القدرة توجب كونه قادراً، وإنّه لكونه قادراً يصحّ الفعل منه والموجب عن القدرة يرجع إليه فى الحقيقة.



could become divine and eternal, then by what is the temporality of bodies to be known? For as long as something from among us could be eternal, the method of affirming bodies through temporality is invalidated, which means that the method of knowing the Divinity is completely invalidated,<sup>185</sup> apart from saying that he may be able to unite or may not.

69. However, according to their teaching about the Uniting, they are all compelled to accept that the One who united with Jesus was the Divinity who was the one substance, and not the hypostasis of the Son and the Word, because the method by which they affirm the Uniting, which is the appearance of divine action from him, requires this from them, unless they say that each one of the hypostases is in reality a Divinity, and they abandon the basis of their doctrine.<sup>186</sup> This being the case, they can be countered with what we have used to disprove the statement of the person who said that with God almighty there was a second, powerful of himself, which is the proof of mutual hindrance and so on.<sup>187</sup> But everything that inheres in a thing must inevitably change the status that can be attributed to it with respect to all the imperceptible and intangible qualities that inhere in the substrate, though it cannot impose a status different from it. So if the Son inhered in Jesus, he must necessarily have imposed a status that was particular to him, though the appearance of divine action separate from him does not require this to be necessary for him.<sup>188</sup> So we will only say that power necessarily made him powerful, and that because he was powerful action could come from him and the effect of the power was attributable to him in reality.

---

<sup>185</sup> It is altogether likely that the lost earlier parts of the *Mughnī* contained arguments for the existence of God based on the proof that the world is temporal and contingent, and must therefore have been brought into existence by an eternal, self-subsistent Maker; cf. Peters, *God's Created Speech*, p. 30. This was a commonly accepted proof among many Muslim and Arabic-speaking Christian theologians (cf. e.g. al-Nāshī' al-Akbar, above pp. 72–73, §35).

<sup>186</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār has already used this argument, above pp. 304–307, §45.

<sup>187</sup> This popular proof, that two divinities would eventually act in contradictory and ultimately chaotic fashion, is based on Q 21.22.

<sup>188</sup> As ‘Abd al-Jabbār has argued above, miracles are, strictly speaking, signs of God's action over the actual things that are changed rather than through human individuals. So the fact that the miracles were associated with Jesus does not necessarily mean that he was united with God.

70. وقد ألزمهم شيخنا أبو على، رحمه الله، أن يقولوا إن المسيح كان عابداً لنفسه إن كان عند الاتحاد قد صار هو والابن شيئاً واحداً. وكون<sup>1</sup> العابد عابداً لنفسه يستحيل لأنّ العبادة كالشكر، فكما أنّه لا يجوز أن يشكر نفسه فكذلك لا يصحّ أن يعبد نفسه. وألزم من قال، "إنّ الاتحاد لم يوجب كونها واحداً"، القول بأنّ عيسى يعبد بعضه، وهذا في الاستحالة كالأول.

وألزمهم أن يكون فعل اللاهوت هو فعل الناسوت عند الاتحاد. ومتى جاز ذلك، جاز أن تكون قدرتهما قدرة واحدة، وما له يقدر أحدهما له يقدر الآخر. فإن قدر الناسوت لذاته كاللاهوت، وجب كونها مثلين، وكذلك إن قدر اللاهوت بقدرة الناسوت.<sup>2</sup> وألزمهم القول بأنّ الأقنومين الآخرين يجوز عليهما الاتحاد كجوازه على أقنوم الكلمة، لأنّ جوهرهما واحد، فما يجوز على بعضها يجوز على سائرهما.

وألزمهم القول باختلاف الأقانيم وتغايرها من حيث جاز على بعضها الاتحاد دون بعض.

ويلزمهم القول بأنّ الابن اتّحد بمريم كاتّحاده بعيسى، لأنّ عيسى بعض لها. وعلى هذا الوجه تأويل بعضهم قوله تعالى، "وإذا قال الله يا عيسى ابن مريم أأنت قلت للناس اتخذوني وأمي إلهين من دون الله؟"، أنّه تعالى ذكره على جهة الإلزام لأنّ عيسى، إن كان إلهاً من حيث اختصّ بأنّه وُلد لا من ذكر، فيجب كون مريم بهذه المنزلة لأنّها ولدت لا عن وطء، وإن كان شيخنا أبو

<sup>1</sup> م: وكونه العابد. <sup>2</sup> م: بقدرة الناسوت.

70. Our master Abū ‘Alī, may God have mercy on him, compelled them to say that Christ was a worshipper of himself, if at the Uniting he and the Son became one thing.<sup>189</sup> But a worshipper worshipping himself is impossible, because worship is like thanks, for just as he cannot thank himself so he must not worship himself. He compelled the one who said that the Uniting did not force the two to be one to say that Jesus worshipped a part of himself. And this is impossible, like the former.

He compelled them to acknowledge that with the Uniting the action of the divine nature was the action of the human nature. And as long as this is accepted, their two powers would have been one power, and what one was capable of so was the other. So, if the human nature was powerful of itself,<sup>190</sup> like the divine nature, the two of them must have been similar, and likewise if the divine nature was powerful by power, like the human nature.

He compelled them to say that the other two hypostases could have united just as the hypostasis of the Word could, because the substance of both is one, so what was permissible for one of them was permissible for all of them.

He compelled them to say that the hypostases were different and separate from one another, in view of the fact that the Uniting was permissible for one of them and not for the other.<sup>191</sup>

This compels them to say that the Son united with Mary as he united with Jesus, because Jesus was a part of her. In this respect, some of them interpreted the words of the exalted One, ‘When God said: “Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to the people, ‘Take my mother and me as two gods beside God?’”’,<sup>192</sup> as though the Almighty was saying this in the manner of a forced argument, because if Jesus was divine through being distinguished by being born without a male, Mary must have had the same status because she gave birth without sexual

<sup>189</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār summarises a last group of arguments from Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī; cf. Thomas, ‘Mu‘tazilī Response’, pp. 305–310.

<sup>190</sup> The quality of being powerful in humans would derive from an accidental attribute of power, while in God it derives from his essence itself. The two are utterly different, and any attempt to make them conform is impossible.

<sup>191</sup> This and the preceding argument are made a great deal of by Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq, in Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 96–107, §§ 151–160. ‘Abd al-Jabbār himself also alludes to it, though quite briefly, above pp. 303–307, §§ 44–45.

<sup>192</sup> Q 5.116. Cf. al-Jāhiz, *Radd*, p. 10.9–13.

على، رحمه الله، حملة على ظاهره وأنّه قد كان فيهم من يقول هذا القول.

71. وألزمهم القول بجواز التنازع بين هذه الأقانيم، لأنّ جوهرها إذا كان واحداً فيجب كونها قادرة، وذلك يصحّح التنازع بينها، وذلك يوجب عجزها وضعفها أو ضعف بعضها.

وبيّن أنّه لا يمكنهم أن يتعلّقوا بالتثليث بقولهم إن إثباته حيّاً إذا لم يرجع به إلى ذاته فيجب أن يرجع به إلى غيره، وكذلك إثباته عالماً متكلّماً بأن قال إنّ كلّ هذا الإثبات يرجع به إلى ذاته سبحانه دون ما عداه، لأنّه لا يمتنع أن يرجع بالصفات الكثيرة إلى ذات واحدة.

وبيّن أنّهم، إذا قالوا في الإله أنّه إله وجوهر وشيء وقديم، فلا بدّ من أن يرجعوا بذلك إلى ذات واحدة، فغير ممتنع أن نقول بمثله فيما قدمناه. وبيّن أن العلم والدلالة يقعان موقع الوصف والإثبات. وقد أوردنا فيه جملة تغنى عن الإعادة.

intercourse.<sup>193</sup> However, our master Abū ‘Alī, may God have mercy on him, took it literally, since there were among them those who held this teaching.<sup>194</sup>

71. He forced them to say that there can be mutual hindrance between these hypostases, because if their substance is one, they must be powerful. And this allows mutual hindrance between them, which necessitates them being impotent and weak, or some of them being weak.<sup>195</sup>

He demonstrated that it was not possible for them to preserve the Trinity by their teaching that asserted he was living. If this was not derived from his essence then it must be derived from something other than him, and similarly to assert that he was knowing and speaking. For he said that all these assertions derive from the blessed One’s essence and not what was other than him, for there is no difficulty in deriving many attributes from one essence.<sup>196</sup>

He demonstrated that if they said that the Divinity was divine, substance, thing and eternal, they would have to derive this from one essence. So there is no difficulty in us saying similar to what we have said above.

He demonstrated that knowledge and proof should replace description and assertion. We have already set out everything about this, making repetition unnecessary.

<sup>193</sup> Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, pp. 74–75, describes this kind of argument, which he terms *argumentum ad hominem*, as follows: ‘it consists in taking the thesis of the opponent for granted, and in drawing from it conclusions which the opponent cannot by any means accept’. As ‘Abd al-Jabbār says, most Christians would not accept the divinity of Mary, and so would understand God’s question to Jesus in the Qur’ān in this sense.

<sup>194</sup> In his lost *tafsīr* Abū ‘Alī remarks in a similar way that this verse directs blame at Christians who attributed teachings about the divinity of Mary to Jesus; cf. D. Gimaret, *Une lecture mu’tazilite du Coran: le Tafsīr d’Abū ‘Alī al-Djubbā’ī* (m. 303), Louvain, 1994, p. 290.

It cannot be ascertained whether Abū ‘Alī actually knew of Christians who regarded Mary as divine, or whether he was drawing inferences from extravagant claims, such as the epithet *Theotokos*, ‘God-bearer’, of which he might have been aware. In recent scholarship the obscure sect of the Collyridians, who are mentioned by the heresiographer Epiphanius (d. 403) in his *Panarion*, are often identified as Mary worshippers who may have been known at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad; cf. e.g. N. Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, Albany NY, 1991, p. 21.

<sup>195</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār has already briefly referred to this argument; cf. pp. 350–351 above, § 69, and n. 187.

<sup>196</sup> This and the following points are, as ‘Abd al-Jabbār notes, summaries of arguments which he has already presented from Abū ‘Alī; cf. pp. 250–253 above, § 17.

ويلزمهم أن يثبتوا له قدرة وسمعاً وبصراً، من حيث أثبتوه قادراً سمياً بصيراً، وذلك يوجب إثباته أقانيم كثيرة. ومتى رجعوا بذلك أجمع إلى ذاته سقطت علتهم. ويلزمهم أن يجعلوا الإله هو أقنوم الأب الذى يثبت حياً عالماً متكلماً دون ما لأجله يصير حياً على طريقة الكلائية. وفي ذلك ترك قولهم.

72. وأما اختلاف عباراتهم في الاتحاد فقد حكيناه، ومن عبّر عن الاتحاد بالحلول والامتزاج من النسطورية والملكانية فقد أبعد لأن من قولهم إنهما لم يصيرا شيئاً واحداً وإنهما طبيعتان على ما كانا. ولو جاز أن يقال فيما هذه حاله اتحد، لوجب في العرض إذا حلّ في المحلّ أن يوصف هو والمحلّ بإنهما اتحداً، وذلك فاسد.

وأما من قال منهم "تجسّد" فلا تصحّ هذه العبارة على موضع قولهم، لأنهم لا يثبتون اللاهوت جسداً عند الاتحاد إلا اليعقوبية إذا قالت إنهما صاراً شيئاً واحداً. ومتى قالوا ذلك لم يمكنهم إثباته متحداً، لأن جسد المسيح بعد ما ادّعوه من الاتحاد كما كان من قبل، فلا فرق بين أن يقولوا "تجسّد" وبين أن يقولوا في سائر الأقانيم، إن يقولوا، إنه تجسّد بسائر الأجسام. وما أدى إلى ذلك وجب فساد.

وكذلك قول من قال "تأنّس" لأنّ اللاهوت لا يصحّ أن يصير إنساناً. وكذلك قول من قال "تركّب".

73. فأما من عوّّل منهم في هذا الباب على اتباع من سلف والرجوع إلى

This compels them to affirm power, hearing and sight of him, since they affirm that he is powerful, hearing and seeing, and this requires the affirmation that he is many hypostases. And should they derive all these from his essence, their pretext collapses.

This compels them to make the Divinity the hypostasis of the Father, who is affirmed to be living, knowing and speaking, and not that by virtue of which he becomes living, according to the method of the *Kullābiyya*.<sup>197</sup> This entails abandoning their teaching.

72. As for the diversity in their explanations of the Uniting, we have already related it. Those from the Nestorians and Melkites who explain the Uniting as indwelling and mixing, they can be ignored, because according to their teaching the two did not become one thing but were two natures as they had been. And if it were possible to say that what was in this condition united, then if an accident indwelt a substrate, this and the substrate would have to be described as uniting together. But this is false.

As for the person among them who said, ‘It became incarnate’, this explanation is not right according to the contents of their teaching, because they do not affirm that the divine nature was a body at the Uniting (except the Jacobites when they say that the two became one thing). And as long as they teach this, it is not possible for them to affirm that it united, because after what they claim about the Uniting the body of Christ was the same as it had been before. So there is no difference between them saying, ‘It became incarnate’, and, if they say it, saying that the other hypostases became incarnate through other bodies. What leads to this necessitates it being false.

It is the same for the person who says, ‘It became human’, because it is not conceivable for the divine nature to become a human being. And it is the same for the person who says, ‘It became composite’.

73. As for those of them who rely upon following predecessors in this matter, and referring to the books and to unquestioning acceptance of

---

<sup>197</sup> In this précis of earlier arguments, ‘Abd al-Jabbār again compares the Christians with his Kullābī/Ash‘arī opponents who predicated real attributes of life, knowledge and so on of God, by which he was living, knowing, etc. If, he points out, God’s characteristics are derived not from a series of attributes but from his essence, then the true Divinity is the Father and not any of the other hypostases, because these function as attributes to him.

الكتب وتقليد التلامذة الأربعة فقلوه ساقط، لأن الكلام في صفة القديم، عز وجلّ، وما يصحّ عليه وما لا يصحّ لا يجوز أن يرجع فيه إلى السمع. ولو ثبت ما ادّعوه سمعاً لوجب أن يتأول على وفق ما يقتضيه، فكيف وموضع مذهبهم التقليد والرجوع إلى خبر الأربعة، ولا يجوز أن يقع بخبر الأربعة العلم؟ فليس لهم أن يقولوا: "إذا كان المسيح عندكم نبياً من أنبياء الله، فكيف يصحّ ادّعاؤكم إبطال مذهبنا مع أنّه مأخوذ عنه؟" لأنّا نعلم كذبهم في ذلك ونقطع على أنّه لم يأت إلّا بما دلّ العقل عليه من التوحيد دون التثليث، ونعلم أنّهم أخطأوا من جهة النقل والتأويل، لأن الذين أخذوا كتابهم عنهم يوحنا ومتّى ولوقا ومارقس، وهذا ممّا يقرّون به، لأنّ المسيح لمّا فُقد (وزعموا أنّه قتل) وقتل أصحابه، لم يبق أحد كان على دينه يؤدى إليهم كتابه وشرعه إلّا هؤلاء الأربعة. وزعموا أنّهم أملوا الأناجيل بثلاث لغات. وقد علّم أنّ الأربعة يجوز عليهم التغير والتبديل والتهمة للكذب، فكيف يصحّ الاعتماد على نقلهم فيما يجوز على الله تعالى وما لا يجوز؟ وإنّما صحّ لنا الاعتماد على ما قلناه، لأنّ نقله كتابنا وأصول ديننا طائفة عظيمة لا يجوز عليها الاتفاق على



the four disciples, the words of such people are irrelevant, because in the case of argument about the character of the eternal One, great and mighty, and what is right and not right for him, one cannot refer to hearsay. And even if what they claimed as hearsay were affirmed, it would have to be interpreted in accordance with what is appropriate to it. But how so, when the content of their doctrine is unquestioning acceptance and deference to the report of the four, and knowledge is not rightly to be found in the communication of the four? So they cannot say, ‘If Christ was one of the prophets of God in your eyes, then how can your claim about the mistakenness of our doctrine be right, when it is taken from him?’ For we know their deceitfulness in this, and we insist that he only declared belief in one God, as reason demonstrates, and not belief in three.<sup>198</sup> And we know that they were in error with regard to transmission and interpretation, because those from whom they took their book were John, Matthew, Luke and Mark.<sup>199</sup> And this is what they declare about it: since when Christ could not be found (they claim that he was killed), and his companions were killed, no single follower of his religion remained who might be able to pass on to them his book and law except these four. And they claimed that they composed the Gospels in three languages.<sup>200</sup> And it is known for the four to conceivably make changes and substitutions and to be suspected of lying. So how is it possible to rely upon transmission from them about what is conceivable and not conceivable about God the exalted? For us, however, it is possible to rely upon what we say, because the transmitters of our book and the principles of our religion are a great company about whom agreement to lie is inconceivable. We

---

<sup>198</sup> In this characteristically compact argument, ‘Abd al-Jabbār points out that the historical Gospels are unreliable because they are the work of the four evangelists and not identical with Jesus’ original *Injīl*. Thus, their witness cannot be accepted above that of the Qur’ān, which records Jesus affirming the oneness of God.

It is unclear whether or not real Christians are responsible for the ingenious argument that since Muslims accept Jesus as a prophet they should accept the teachings which Christians have transmitted from him.

<sup>199</sup> There is probably no significance in the order of the names given here, though the order does follow that given by al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, p. 24.10–11.

<sup>200</sup> These are presumably Hebrew, Greek, and Syriac. In the later *Tathbūt*, pp. 152–155 (trans. Stern, ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s Account of how Christ’s Religion was falsified’, pp. 134–137), ‘Abd al-Jabbār gives a fuller account of how the Gospels came to be written, though without insinuating that the evangelists lied. Here he may have in mind the equally critical account given by al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, p. 24.9–20.

الكذب، والعلم الضروري قد حصل لنا بما نقلوه، فلذلك صحّ ما قلناه.

74. ولهذه الطريقة أبطلنا ما نقلوه من قتل عيسى وصلبه، لأن أصل نقلهم هو هؤلاء الأربعة وعولوا على تقليدهم في ذلك، ولأن الصلب بعد القتل قد يغيّر صورة المصلوب ويشبه حاله بغيره. فمتى<sup>1</sup> نقل ذلك، جاز أن تشبه الحال فيه.<sup>2</sup> وما هذه حاله من الأمور لا تعلم صحته باضطراب، لأن من شرط ما تُعلم باضطراب صحته أن يكون ممّا يلتبس الحال فيه. وقد قيل فيه إنّه لا يمتنع أن يكون قد ألقى شبهة عيسى على ذلك المصلوب، فلذلك اشتبه الحال فيه، وإن ذلك يصحّ، لأن الزمان كان زمان نبي يجوز نقض العادة فيه ويكون معجزاً لذلك النبي. وما ذكرناه أولاً أولى أن يُعتمد عليه، لأننا نعلم بقوله تعالى، ”وما قتلوه وما صلبوه ولكن شبه لهم“، أنّه لا يصحّ أن يكون النقل قد وقع على وجه يوجب العلم، لأن ذلك يوجب إبطال الأصل الذي نؤصله في الأخبار. وإنّا اشتبه الحال فيه لأن ذلك المصلوب وافق حال فقدّمهم لعيسى، فقوى في الظنّ أنّه المصلوب.

<sup>1</sup>خ: فمن. <sup>2</sup>خ: عليه الحال فيه.

already have undeniable knowledge about what they transmitted, so in this way what we say is correct.

74. According to this method, we disprove what they have related about the death and crucifixion of Jesus, because the basis of their account are these four, and they rely upon unquestioning acceptance of them in this, and also because crucifixion, apart from death, can change the appearance of the person crucified and can make his condition resemble that of another.<sup>201</sup> So, when this is related, it is conceivable for the condition to be in doubt. And owing to the circumstances, who the one in this condition really was cannot be known necessarily, since one of the concerns about knowing necessarily who he really was is that he was someone whose condition had been made obscure. It has been said about him that it is not beyond question that Jesus’ likeness was cast upon this crucified person, and thus his condition was made obscure, and that this is correct, because the time was that of a prophet in which the breach of normal events was possible, and this was a miracle for this prophet.<sup>202</sup> But what we have said in the first place is more reliable, because we know by the words of the Almighty, ‘Though they did not kill him and did not crucify him, but this was made unclear to them’, that the account cannot properly correspond to any matter that requires knowledge, because this requires invalidating the principle we establish concerning reports.<sup>203</sup> So his condition was made obscure, because this crucified person coincided with the time of Jesus’ loss to them, so the idea that he was the person crucified grew in vigour.

---

<sup>201</sup> This is based on inferences from Q 4.157, *wa-lākin shubbiha lahum*, that the individual who was crucified was made unclear to those who stood around.

<sup>202</sup> This kind of explanation would have been part of the Muslim exegetical tradition by ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s time. For example, Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī says that the Jews crucified another in Jesus’ place, and since the witnesses were some distance from the place of execution they could not know this, while after his death his features would have been too distorted to make him recognisable; Gimaret, *Lecture mu’tazilite*, pp. 252–253.

<sup>203</sup> The inference that the substitute who was crucified was given Jesus’ appearance stretches the evidence too far for ‘Abd al-Jabbār. In his view, the information given in the Qur’ān can only be understood to mean that the crucified person’s appearance was made unclear. In the *Tāthbūt*, pp. 137–140 (trans Stern, ‘Quotations from Apocryphal Gospels’, pp. 42–44), he goes into considerable detail about how this substitute was arrested and crucified in place of Jesus, but he makes no mention of his resembling Jesus.

75. فليس يمكنهم مع ذلك أن يوردوا في الإنجيل بصريح مقالته، وإنما قلّدوا فيه رؤسائهم مثل نسطور ويعقوب ومَن كان على دين الملك، ولذلك لا يثبت لهم على النظر قول، لأن مرجعهم فيه إلى التقليد دون الشبه التي تُعتقد لأجلها المذاهب. ومتى أخذوا في النظر كان حالهم فيه مثل ما حكى عن بعضهم، وقد سأله بعض أصحابنا فقال له: "لِم جعلت أقنوم العلم ابناً دون أقنوم الحياة؟" فقال: "لأن العلم مذكّر والحياة مؤنثة"؛ فقال له السائل: "فهلاً قلت في الحياة إنّها ابنة الله، لأن الحياة مؤنثة؟"

76. ومثل ما حكى لى عن قرّة الملكى، وهو رئيسهم، أنّه اعتمد في التثليث على أنّ الله يجب أن يكون رئيساً ولا يجوز أن يكون متّحداً بالرئاسة على خلقه، لأن ذلك يوجب أن لا منّة له عليهم إن كان خلقهم ليرؤس، فيجب أن تكون رئاسته قديمة، ولا بدّ من أن تكون رئاسة على مرؤوس. ولا يخلو ذلك المرؤوس من وجهين: إمّا أن يكون مثل الله في الجوهر أو أخسّ منه جوهرًا؛ فإن كان أخسّ منه جوهرًا، فقد حطّت رئاسة الله عن شرفها لأن شرف الرئاسة أن تكون رئاسة على من هو مثله في الجوهر وعدله في الطبع، ولذلك متى قيل للرجل أنّه رئيس الثور والحمار يغضب الغضب الشديد، فيجب أن يكون المرؤوس مثل الله في الجوهر. ثم لا تخلو رئاسته عليه من أن تكون بالقهر أو بالرضا، أو رئاسة طبيعيّة. ولا يجوز أن تكون

75. Apart from this, they cannot unambiguously identify their doctrine in the Gospel, but rather they have unquestioningly followed their leaders in it, such as Nestorius, Jacob and the person who accepted the belief of the emperor.<sup>204</sup> And so they have nothing to say in debate, because their recourse in it is to unquestioning acceptance, without suspicion, because of which the beliefs are given credit. And whenever they imitate in debate, their circumstance is like what was related from one of them when one of our colleagues questioned him and said to him, ‘Why do you make the hypostasis of Knowledge Son and not the hypostasis of Life?’ He said, ‘Because knowledge is masculine and life is feminine’. So the questioner said to him, ‘They why have you not said that Life is the daughter of God, because life is feminine?’

76. It is like what was related to me from Qurra the Melkite, their head,<sup>205</sup> that with regard to the Trinity he employed the notion that God must be head, though he cannot be united with headship over his creation because this would necessarily mean that he could have no grace towards them if he had created them in order to have headship. So his headship must be eternal, though it could only be headship over a being who was subject to it. This being who was subject to headship could only be one of two things: either like God in substance, or inferior to him in substance. And if he was inferior to him in substance then God’s headship would diminish in its eminence, because the eminence of headship is that it should be over a being like him in substance and equal to him in nature; thus, when it is said to a man that he is head over the ox and ass he will become extremely angry. So the one subject to headship must be like God in substance. Then, his headship over him can only be by force or by consent, or headship

---

<sup>204</sup> In reports from the second/eighth century onwards, three of the leaders of the Christian denominations are called Nestorius, Jacob and Malkān, servants of Paul from whom they derived their differing versions of the faith (cf. P. van Koningsveld, ‘The Islamic Image of Paul and the Origin of the Gospel of Barnabas’, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 20, 1996, pp. 200–228). ‘Abd al-Jabbār seems aware that this latter name is a mistake (a personification derived from *Malkiyya*, on the assumption that like the other two this denomination is named after an individual), though in referring to an individual who received this teaching from the emperor, he maybe preserves a reminiscence of the polemical tradition.

<sup>205</sup> Either Theodore Abū Qurra’s full name has been omitted in copying, or ‘Abd al-Jabbār did not know enough about the Christian to give it. The following argument is a summary of one of Theodore’s extant writings; cf. Bacha, *Oeuvres arabes*, pp. 91–104; trans. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, pp. 140–149.

بالقهر، لأنّه لا يجوز أن يدخل على إله<sup>1</sup> هو مثل الله القهر، ولا يجوز أن تكون عن تراض، لأنّ ما كان كذلك فله ابتداء، وجائز أن لا يرضى به. فثبت أنّها طبيعيّة، وهى كرئاسة الآباء على الأبناء وكرئاسة آدم على هايل، فثبت أن له ابناً وأنّه مثله.

فقد أبناك ما حكيناه من شبههم أن أصل مقالتهم مأخوذ عن التقليد، لأن ما جرى هذا المجرى لا يجوز أن نعتقد لأجله مذهباً. أترى هذا المستدلّ لم يعلم أن ما قاله يوجب عليه أن يثبت له صاحبة لأن يكون رئيساً عليها، كما كان آدم رئيساً على حواء. وهذه الرئاسة أقرب إلى الطبيعة من رئاسته على هايل، لأن ذلك حادث. ومتى نفى عنه الصاحبة بأمر ما لزمه بمثله نفى الابن.

77. وكيف يصحّ أن يثبت بذلك ثلاثة أقانيم، وعلته توجب إثبات مرؤوس عليه فقط، وذلك يتمّ بالأقنومين. وبعد، فإن الرئاسة لا تستعمل في الله سبحانه أصلاً، وإنّا تستعمل فيمن يجوز على من يتقدم قومه بحال يبين به منهم، وذلك يستحيل عليه عزّ وجلّ، ولو أن قائلاً عارضه بأنّه تعالى لا بدّ من أن يكون مالكاً وجوذاً وكريماً وعزيزاً ويثبت بعد ذلك معانى وأقانيم له فما الذى كان ينفصل منه. ولم نورد هذه الشبهة لتكلّم على إبطالها، لأن الحال فيها ظاهر لكن لننبه<sup>2</sup> على أن الأمر في قولهم على ما بيناه من أنّه مأخوذ من التقليد. فأما تسميتهم الأقانيم خواصّ وصفات فقد أكثر الناس مكالتهم فيه. والرجوع في ذلك إلى عبارات لا طائل في الكلام عليها، وما يتعلّق

<sup>1</sup>خ: الذى. <sup>2</sup>خ: لنقيسه.

by nature. It cannot possibly be by force, because force cannot possibly be allowed for a Divinity such as God. And it cannot possibly be by mutual consent, because something such as this would have to have a beginning and it is possible that he would not consent to it. So it is established that it is by nature, which is like the headship of fathers over sons and Adam’s headship over Abel. So it is established that he has a Son and that he is like him.

We have already explained to you in their comparison we have related to you that the basis of their doctrine is derived from unquestioning acceptance, because we cannot believe in any faith that adopts this way. Can you see that this person seeking to make a proof does not know that what he says requires him to affirm that he has a consort so that he should be head over her, just as Adam was head over Eve. This headship is more natural than his headship over Abel, because the latter came into being. And if he is denied a consort because of what must apply to him by circumstance, he is similarly denied a son.

77. And how can he possibly be sure from this of three hypostases, when his pretext necessitates nothing more than proof for a being under headship, and this results in two hypostases? Furthermore, ‘headship’ cannot be employed at all with respect to God, may he be blessed, but only to a being who may possibly have priority over his people in some way that distinguishes him from them, and this is impossible for the great and mighty One. And if the one who said it should retort by saying that the Almighty must certainly be a possessor, generous, beneficent and powerful, and after this affirms determinants and hypostases for him, then what can be denied him?<sup>206</sup>

But we have not set down this comparison in order to argue about its pointlessness, because the position about that is obvious, but in order to point out that the situation in their teaching is as we have made clear, that it is derived from unquestioning acceptance.

As for their terming the attributes particularities and attributes, people have already debated this with them often.<sup>207</sup> It derives from modes of expression, and arguing about it is of no avail. We have already

<sup>206</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār sees this proof based on headship as the first step that might lead to the complete overturning of the distinction between God and created beings.

<sup>207</sup> Among other examples, ‘Abd al-Jabbār may have in mind Abū ‘Īsa al-Warrāq’s arguments on this point, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 172–181, §§ 141–150. Cf. also al-Bāqil-lānī, above pp. 168–169, §§ 19–20.

بالمعنى فقد أتينا على فساد، سواء قالوا فى الأقانيم إنَّها متغايرة ومختلفة، أو امتنعوا من ذلك، أو قالوا إنَّها غير الجوهر، أو ليست هى الجوهر، أو قالوا إنَّها هى الجوهر، لأنَّ الكلام فى إفساد جميع ذلك قد تقدم.

### فصل: فى إبطال ما ذهبوا إليه فى المسيح وعبادته وما يتصل بذلك

78. اعلم أنَّ النصرارى أجمع ممَّن حكيما قولهم ممَّن يدينون بعبادة المسيح، وإنَّما يختلفون فى أن المعبود منه ما هو وفى أنَّه على أى وجه يُعبد. وقولهم فى ذلك مبنى على قولهم فى الاتحاد والتأّس.

فمن قال منهم إنَّ المسيح جوهر واحد أقنوم واحد شخص واحد يقول فيه إنَّه يُعبد فى الحقيقة، لكنهم على فرقتين: فاليقويّة تقول إنَّه إنسان وإله، وإن كان جوهرًا واحدًا، لكنه إنسان من وجه وإله من وجه، كالإنسان الذى هو نفس من غير الوجه الذى هو جسد. وزعمت فرقة أخرى يقال لها الوليانيّة أنَّ المسيح هو إله من حيث هو إنسان، ولا يعقل لاهوت إلا من الوجه الذى هو ناسوت. فهاتان الفرقتان تقولان إنَّه يُعبد فى الحقيقة.

فأما الملكانيّة والمآرونيّة والنسطوريّة فمن قولهم إنَّ المسيح جوهران اثنان، لاهوت وناسوت، وإله وإنسان؛ وإن اختلفوا فيما بينهم. فمنهم من قال: "إنَّ إرادتهم واحدة"؛ ومنهم من قال: "إنَّهما ذوا إرادتين".



shown the falseness of anything that is related to a determinant, whether they have talked about the hypostases being distinct from one another and different or have not done so, or have talked about them being other than the substance or not the substance, or whether they say that they are the substance. Argument about the falseness of all of this has been given above.

*Chapter: On disproving what they believe about Christ  
and worship of him and what is related to this*

78. Know that all the Christians whose teachings we have related believe in the worship of Christ, although they differ over what of him should be worshipped, and over the way he should be worshipped. Their teaching about this is built upon their teaching about the Uniting and Incarnation.

Those of them who say that Christ was one substance, one hypostasis and one individual say of him that he should be worshipped in actuality, though they are in two groups. The Jacobites say that he was human and divine, and was one substance, although he was human in one respect and divine in another, like the human who is soul in a different respect from being body. Another group called the Julianists claimed that Christ was divine by virtue of being human, and the divine nature could only be understood in the respect that he was a human nature.<sup>208</sup> These two groups say that he should be worshipped in actuality.

As for the Melkites, Maronites<sup>209</sup> and Nestorians, their teaching is that Christ was two substances, divine nature and human nature, divinity and human, although they have differed over matters between them. Some of them have said, ‘Their two wills were one’, and others have said, ‘They were both possessors of wills’.

---

<sup>208</sup> The isolated naming of this group, whose teachings ‘Abd al-Jabbār may actually have alluded to already (cf. n. 25), indicates either that he knew much more about the teachings of Christianity than he generally divulges, or that at this point he is following a particular source. Abū ‘Isā al-Warrāq described the Julianists in his lost *Maqālāt al-nās* (cf. his remarks in his *Radd*, in Thomas, *Trinity*, pp. 70–71, § 12), and in his *Radd* he says that he will go on to write a refutation of them and other minor Christian groups (cf. Thomas, *Incarnation*, pp. 276–277, § 352). Al-Nāshi’ al-Akbar gives a brief account of their doctrines, above pp. 54–55, § 21, but says nothing that directly resembles what ‘Abd al-Jabbār relates.

<sup>209</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to this group in his introduction, pp. 236–239, § 9.

ولا يمتنعون هؤلاء أجمع من القول بأن الإله صُلب ناسوته وتأنَّسهُ ومات. ويقولون: "مريم ولدت إلهًا"، ولا يقولون: "ولدت الإله"، لأنه يوهم أنها ولدت الأقانيم الثلاثة، إلا النسطورية فإنها تقول: "إن المسيح الذى هو إله وإنسان وكُذ وصُلب"، ولا تقول: "إن الإله وكُذ وصُلب". وأما اليعقوبية فإنها تقول بأن الإله قُتِل وصُلب في الحقيقة وإن اختلفوا في هل لحقه الألم أم لا، على ما حكيناه من قبل.

وربما قالوا: "إن المسيح وكُذ ولادتين: أحدهما باللاهوتية من الله قبل الدهور، والآخر بالناسوتية من مريم بعد الدهور."

79. واعلم أن الذى بيناه من إبطال قولهم في الاتحاد يبطل جميع ما يذهبون إليه من أن المسيح يُعبد ويخلق الأجسام ويرزق وينعم وأنه الخالق للعالم والمستحق للعبادة بانفراده أو هو مع غيره، لأن الكلام في ذلك فرع عليه، وفساد ذلك يغنى عن فساد.

وما قدمناه من الدلالة على أن الجسم لا يجوز أن يفعل الجسم والحياة والقدرة يُبطل قولهم بذلك أيضاً، لأن المعلوم من حال المسيح أنه جسم في الحقيقة، فكيف يصح أن يفعل ما يستوجب به العبادة على الأجسام الحية، مع أنه يستحيل أن ينعم عليها الإنعام الذى يستحق به العبادة؟

ولا فرق، والحال هذه، بين من قال بعبادته أو بعبادة سائر الأنبياء أو سائر الأجسام، لأن العبادة إنما تستحق بقدر من النعم عظيم لا توازنها نعمه. ولذلك لا يستحق بعض العباد من بعض العبادة، على تفاوت أحوالهم في إنعام بعضهم على بعض في الكثرة والقلّة، من حيث لم يختص ما يحصل من جهتهم من النعم بما تختص به نعم القديم، جلّ وعزّ، لأنه يختص بأمور: أحدها أنه الأصل في النعم لأنه لولاه لما صحّ سائر النعم، فصار من هذا الوجه كأن جميع النعم منه، وثانيه أنه قد بلغ قدراً لا يجوز أن توازنه نعم

None of these draw back from saying that the humanity and incarnate being of the Divinity was crucified and died. And they say, ‘Mary gave birth to a Divinity’, and they do not say, ‘She gave birth to the Divinity’, because this would imply that she gave birth to the three hypostases. This is except the Nestorians, because they say, ‘Christ, who was divine and human was born and crucified’, but they do not say, ‘The Divinity was born and crucified’. As for the Jacobites, they say that the Divinity was killed and crucified in reality, though they differ over whether pain affected him or not, as we have already related.

They sometimes say, ‘Christ was begotten twice, once in divinity from God before the ages, and the other in humanity from Mary after the ages.’

79. Know that the pointlessness of their teaching about the Uniting that we have demonstrated makes pointless all that they believe about Christ being worshipped, creating bodies, nurturing and giving grace, and that he is the Creator of the world and the One worthy of worship alone or with others. For the argument about that is more extensive than it, and the falseness of that saves us from showing its falseness.

The proof we have set out earlier that a body cannot make a body or life or power,<sup>210</sup> disproves their teaching about this as well, because Christ’s condition as a body in reality is well known. So how can he possibly have given bodies life, by which he would certainly have deserved worship, apart from it being impossible for him to have bestowed kindness upon them, by which he would have merited worship?

This being the situation, there is no difference between the person who teaches about worship of him and worship of all the prophets or of all bodies, because worship is reserved for a great measure of favours that cannot be outbalanced. And so a human does not deserve worship from another human according to the different ways one gives favours over another in large and small matters, because the favours bestowed by them can never be marked out in the way that favours from the eternal One, great and mighty, can. For this is marked out in a number of ways: One is that he is the origin of favours, because if it were not for him then no favours would be real, so that in this respect it is as though all favours are from him; the second is that he is so pre-eminent that he cannot be weighed against the favours of another; the third is

---

<sup>210</sup> This will have been given in one of the lost early parts of the *Mughnī*.

غيره، وثالثه لأن نِعَمَ غيره نعمٌ منه، لأنَّه إنَّما صار مالكا له على وجه يصحّ أن ينعم به على غيره بأمور من جهة الله تعالى، إمّا في النعم أو فيه أو في المنعم عليه.

وقد علم أن هذه الوجوه يستحيل حصولها إلّا للقديم تعالى، فيجب أن يختصّ باستحقاق العبادة دون غيره، وإن كان غيره من المنعمين قد يستحقّ الشكر بقدر إنعامه على غيره، على ما نعلمه من ذلك في الشاهد، لأن العلم بحسن شكر المنعم وبأن المنعم يستحقه وأنَّه يجب على المنعم عليه ضروري<sup>1</sup> في كثير من الأحوال.<sup>2</sup> والعلم بأنّ العبادة يقبح فعلها بكثير من المنعمين معلوم باضطرار في كثير من الأحوال.

80. فكلّ ذلك يبيّن أنّ الجسم لا يجوز أن يستحقّ العبادة على وجهه، وفي ذلك إبطال قولهم بأنّ المسيح يجب أن يُعبد. على أن من قال منهم إنَّه إله في الحقيقة وإنّ الجوهرين قد صاروا واحداً يلزمه أن يجوز كون الإله جسماً محدوداً أكلاً شارباً، لأنَّه إن لم يجوز ذلك لزمه القول باستحالة ذلك أجمع على المسيح، مع علمنا بفساده. وقد علمنا أنّ جواز ذلك على الإله يستحيل لما دللنا به على حدوث الأجسام وتكلّمنا به على المُجسّمة من وجوه الأدلّة.

على أن المعلوم من حال المسيح أنّه كان يعبد ويدعو إلى العبادة، فكيف يجوز أن يُقال إنَّه معبود في الحقيقة؟ وكيف يصحّ من المعبود أن يعبد نفسه؟ ولو جاز ذلك لجاز أن يكون خالقاً لنفسه ومنعماً عليها وإلهاً لها، وكلّ ذلك متناقض مستحيل.

على أنّه يجب على قولهم أن يجوز عليه الموت والآلام، ولو صحّ ذلك منه، لم يمتنع أن يعذب ويثاب. ومن هذه حاله، لم تحقّ له العبادة، وكان حاله في الحاجة كحال سائر الأجسام.

<sup>1</sup>خ: على المنعم ضروري. <sup>2</sup>م: من الأحوال. فكل ذلك يبين.

because another's favours are favours from him, since he is possessor of the person in the sense that he<sup>211</sup> can duly give favours to another by virtue of them coming from God the almighty, either in the favours or in the person or in the one who is favoured.

It is already known that these possibilities can only apply to the almighty, eternal One, so he is distinguished as worthy of worship, and no other. However, others who bestow favours may deserve thanks by virtue of their bestowing favours on others, as we know from experience. For to know that thanking a benefactor is good, and that the benefactor deserves it, and that the beneficiary is obliged to do this, is intuitive in most circumstances, and to know that worship is a disgraceful thing to offer most benefactors is intuitively known in most circumstances.

80. All this makes clear that a body should not deserve worship at all, which means their teaching that Christ should be worshipped is disproved. However, those among them who say that he was divine in reality and that the two substances became one are compelled to agree to the Divinity being a body, limited, eating and drinking, because if they do not agree to this they have to say all this is impossible for Christ, even though we know it is false. For we know for sure that it is impossible to agree to this with respect to the Divinity according to what we have proved about bodies being temporal, and the various proofs we have employed against the Anthropomorphists.<sup>212</sup>

However, it is known that Christ was such that he used to give worship and called to worship, so how can it possibly be said that he is worshipped in reality? And how can one who is worshipped properly worship himself? If this were acceptable then it would be acceptable for him to be Creator of himself, Bestower of favours upon himself, and Divinity to himself. This is all self-contradictory and impossible. But, according to their teaching, death and sufferings could affect him, and if this was possible for him, there is no reason why he could not be punished or rewarded. And someone such as this has no right to worship when he is just as needy as every body.

<sup>211</sup> I.e. this person.

<sup>212</sup> Again, these will have been given in one of the lost early parts of the *Mughnī*.

81. ولا يمكنهم أن يقولوا: "إن ما لحقه من القتل والصلب بزعمهم تخيل وليس بحقيقة"، لأنهم يجعلون اللاهوت هو الناسوت وقد ثبت قتل الناسوت عندهم أوموته، ولا يصح أن يلحقه ذلك ولا يَألم، وذلك يوجب أن يكون الإله يَألم في الحقيقة.

وأما من قال بالجوهريين والطبيعتين فيجب أن يصرفوا<sup>1</sup> العبادة إلى اللاهوت دون الناسوت، وذلك يبطل قولهم أن المعبود هو المسيح، بل يجب أن يقولوا إنه الأقنوم اللاهوتي. فإن قالوا: "إن قولنا 'المسيح' يحتوى على اللاهوت والناسوت فلذلك أجزنا عبادته"، قيل لهم: فيجب أن لا يجوزوا أن يكون المسيح هو المعبود لأن هذا القول ينتظم مع المعبود غيره. ولا فرق بين قولهم إن المسيح يُعبد ويخلق ويرزق وبين قولهم إن المسيح يستحيل أن يأكل ويشرب ويصلب ويُقتل، لأنه متى جاز أن يضاف إلى الله ما لا يصح إلا على اللاهوت من العبادة وغيرها، جاز أن يُنفى عنه ما يستحيل على اللاهوت وإن صح على الناسوت من الأكل والشرب والصلب وغيره.

على أنه يلزمهم القول بأن الإله كائن من النطفة أو مولود من مريم على ما يذهبون إليه، إما على بعض الوجوه أو من كل وجه. وقد قال شيخنا أبو عثمان الجاحظ: "إن الذي يتقصى<sup>2</sup> حكاية قولهم ليتبين الوجه في إبطاله؛ وإلا فقد كان يجب تبرئة القديم تعالى عن أن يذكر بهذه الأذكار، تعالى الله عن قولهم علواً كبيراً."

82. فإن قال منهم قائل: "إننا نعبد المسيح لا لأنه لاهوت أو اتحد به اللاهوت، لكن لأنه الوسط بيننا وبين اللاهوت فيما نعرفه من قبله. فلعظيم

<sup>1</sup> م: يضيفوا. <sup>2</sup> خ، م: يقتصى.

81. They are not able to say, ‘The death and crucifixion that affected him (as they claim) was imaginary and not actual’,<sup>213</sup> because they make the divine nature the human nature, and the killing of the human nature or its death is confirmed in their view. But this cannot rightly have affected him, nor could he have suffered, because this would have necessitated the Divinity suffering in reality.

Those who teach about the two substances and two natures<sup>214</sup> have to direct worship to the divine nature not the human nature, which disproves their teaching that the one who is worshipped is Christ; rather, they have to say that it is the divine hypostasis. So if they say, ‘Our term “Christ” refers to the divine nature and the human nature, and so we can justify worshipping him’, say to them, But you cannot justify Christ being the one worshipped, because this statement places another with him as being worshipped. There is no difference between their saying that Christ is worshipped, creates and nourishes, and their saying that it is impossible for Christ to eat, drink, be crucified and killed. For as long as worship and other things that are only appropriate for the divine nature are ascribed to God, so what is impossible for the divine nature and appropriate for the human nature, such as eating, drinking, crucifixion and so on, must be denied of him.

They are compelled to say that the Divinity existed as a sperm, or was born of Mary, according to what they believe, either in some respects or in every respect.

Our master Abū ‘Uthmān al-Jāḥiẓ said, ‘Whoever studies an account of their teaching will find a means of disproving it. The almighty, eternal One must anyway be freed from being talked about in such ways, may God be highly exalted above what they say.’<sup>215</sup>

82. If one of them should say, ‘We worship Christ not because he is the divine nature or because the divine nature united with him, but because he is the mediator between us and the divine nature according to what we know from him. So because his grace is great and is close

---

<sup>213</sup> This is the teaching of the unnamed group which ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to in §8, who may be Julianists.

<sup>214</sup> The Nestorians; cf. §5 above.

<sup>215</sup> Assuming this quotation is from al-Jāḥiẓ’s *Radd ‘alā al-Naṣārā*, like the other quotations from him here, it is no longer to be found among the surviving extracts of the work. The *Radd* was edited down to its present form not long after ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s time by a certain ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Ḥassān (d. 450/1058); cf. C. Pellat, ‘Nouvel essai d’inventaire de l’oeuvre Ḡāḥiẓienne’, *Arabica* 31, 1984, p. 119.

نعمته ومقاربتها لنعمة القديم، جلّ وعزّ، حسن منّا عبادته؛ قيل لهم: إنَّ أوَّل ما في هذا الباب أنَّه يجب حسن عبادة جميع الأنبياء لهذه العلّة. ويوجب أن يحسن منّا عبادة الآباء وسائر من عظمت نعمته علينا وأياديه لدينا بحسب نعمه، لأنَّه لا يمكنهم أن يخصّوا نعم المسيح بما تنفصل به من نعم من ذكرناه على حسب ما بيّناه من اختصاص نعمه، جلّ وعزّ، بالأمر التي تبين بها من نعم غيره. وليس في نعم المسيح أكثر من أنَّه أزيد من نعم غيره. وذلك يوجب عليهم ما ذكرناه من الوجهين. ولسنا نجيز أن يكون ما أمر الله به من السجود لآدم عبادة له، لأن العبادة لا تحقّ إلّا لله، عزّ وجلّ، وإنّما أمر سبحانه بالسجود وغيره على جهة التقرب إليه والعبادة له، عزّ وجلّ، بذلك دلالة على فضل آدم، عليه السلام. وليست العبادة ممّا تتغيّر حالها بالأمر أو يكشف عن حالها، فتحسن من جهة السمع كما نقوله في العبادات الشرعيّة. وإذا لم يصحّ أن يستحقّ الشكر من غير نعمة فيجب أن لا يصحّ استحقاق العبادة من غير النعمة المخصوصة التي ذكرناها. ولو جاز أن يحسن بالأمر لجاز مثله في الشكر، ولذلك قلنا إن الشكر والمدح والتعظيم لا تحسن إلّا باستحقاق. ونحن نذكر الكلام في أن العبادة لا يستحقّها إلّا الله تعالى، وفي بيان العبادة ومفارقتها للشكر وما يتصل بذلك في باب الوعيد. وفيما ذكرناه الآن مقنع.

83. وأمّا ما يذكرونه ممّا يجري مجرى الطعن فيما ندعيه من أنَّه تكلم في المهد وأنَّه لو كان له أصل لاشتهر وظهر فيهم كاشتهار سائر معجزاته، فالقول



to the grace of the eternal One, great and mighty, in our view worshipping him is good’; say to them, The first thing on this issue is that for this reason worshipping all the prophets is good. And it follows that we would regard it as good to worship ancestors and all whose grace has been great to us and whose influence over us has been in measure with their favours. For they cannot distinguish Christ’s favours, in the way these have been separated, from the favours of those we have mentioned in the same way as the particular favours we have mentioned of the great and mighty One in things that distinguish them from the favour of others. In the favours of Christ there is only a greater amount of the favours of others. And this compels them to accept the two respects we have mentioned. And we do not accept that the prostration to Adam that God ordered was worship of him,<sup>216</sup> because worship is only fitting for God, great and mighty. And the blessed One only commanded prostration and the like as a form of loyalty to him and worship of him, great and mighty, this being proof of Adam’s superiority, peace be upon him. The condition of worship is not changed with circumstances or has its condition open to examination, and so it is good on the grounds of revelation as we say it is with regard to acts of devotion based on law. And if thanks cannot be deserved without a favour, then it follows that worship cannot be deserved without the particular kind of favour we have mentioned. And if it could be right because of circumstance, then the same could happen with regard to thanks. Thus we have said that thanks, glorifying and exalting are only good when deserved. And we shall state the argument that God almighty alone is worthy of worship, and the difference and dissimilarity between it and thanks and what relates to this, in the section on the threat.<sup>217</sup> Concerning what we have said here, this is enough.

83. As for their words, which are more or less calumny, about what we claim that he spoke in the cradle,<sup>218</sup> and that if it had any basis it would be renowned and manifest among them in the same way as his other miracles, the discussion about it is given in the section on miracles and

<sup>216</sup> Q 2.34, 7.11, etc.

<sup>217</sup> This would have occurred in one of the lost vols. XVIII or XIX of the *Mughnī*.

<sup>218</sup> Q 3.46, 5.110, 19.29–33. The Christians who provoked al-Jāhīz to write his *Radd* include among the questions by which they hope to embarrass Muslims one on this point, *Radd*, p. 12.4–13.4.

فيه يُذكر في باب المعجزات والأخبار. وكذلك القول فيما يعترضون به على القرآن من نحو قولهم إن فيه إثبات إدريس ونوح وغيرهم أنبياء، ولم يكونوا كذلك، أو إن فيه أنه تعالى لم يرسل مِّن يوحى إليه إلاّ الرجال، وليس الأمر كذلك، وإنّه قال: "أأنت قلت للناس: اتخذوني وأُمّى إلهين من دون الله؟"، ولم يقل ذلك أحد من النصارى، وإن فيه أن اليهود قالت: "إنّ الله فقيرٌ ونحن أغنياء"، وأن "يد الله مغلولة"، وأنّها قالت في عَزِير إنّ ابن الله، والمعلوم من حالها أنّها لم تقل ذلك، إلى ما شاكل هذا يجيء في المعجزات، فلا وجه لذكره الآن.

reports.<sup>219</sup> Similarly with the discussion about their objections against the Qur’ān, such as their saying that it contains the assertion that Idrīs, Noah and others were prophets,<sup>220</sup> because they were not; or that in it is that the Almighty only sent men on whom he conferred revelation, because this is not the case;<sup>221</sup> and that he said, ‘Did you say to people, “Take me and my mother as gods apart from God”?’’, because no Christian ever said this;<sup>222</sup> and that in it is that the Jews said, ‘God is poor and we are rich’, and ‘God’s hand is shackled’, and that they said that Ezra was the son of God,<sup>223</sup> while it is known from their circumstances that they never said this; this and the like will come in the miracles,<sup>224</sup> because there is no intention to talk about it now.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. *Mughnī*, vol. XV, ed. M. al-Khuḍayrī and M.M. Qāsim, Cairo, 1965, pp. 215–216.

<sup>220</sup> E.g. Q 4.163, 33.7, 19.56.

<sup>221</sup> This is presumably a reference to the Virgin Mary receiving the visitation from Gabriel, in Q 3.42–51 and 19.17–21. She was thus addressed by the angel of the revelation, although she was not a prophet.

<sup>222</sup> Q 5.116; cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, p. 10.9–13.

<sup>223</sup> Q 3.181, 5.64, 9.30; cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*, pp. 10.14–11.3, 33.16–35.21.

<sup>224</sup> The discussion of miracles occurs in *Mughnī*, vol. XV, pp. 168 onwards, though it does not appear to include any explicit discussion of these items.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī, *Al-mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-al-‘adl*, vol. V, ed. M.M. al-Khuḍayrī, Cairo, 1958; vol. XV, ed. M.M. al-Khuḍayrī and M.M. Qāsim, Cairo, 1965; vol. XVI, ed. A. al-Khūlī, Cairo, 1960.
- , *Tathbūt dalā’il al-nubuwwa*, ed. ‘A.-K. ‘Uthmān, Beirut, 1966.
- ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī (attr.), *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, ed. ‘A.-K. ‘Uthmān, Cairo, 1965.
- Abel, A., ‘Le chapitre sur le Christianisme dans the “Tahmīd” d’al-Bāqillānī (mort en 1013)’, in *Études d’Orientalisme dédiées à la mémoire de Lévi Provençal*, vol. I, Paris, 1962.
- Abramowski, L., and A. Goodman, eds, *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts, vol. II, Introduction, Translation and Indexes*, Cambridge, 1972.
- Abū ‘Isā al-Warrāq, *Radd ‘alā al-thalāth firaq min al-Naṣārā*, see Thomas, *Trinity*, and Thomas, *Incarnation*.
- Accad, M., ‘The Ultimate Proof-Text: the Interpretation of John 20.17 in Muslim-Christian Dialogue (second/eighth-eighth/fourteenth centuries)’, in D. Thomas, *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule*, Leiden, 2003.
- , ‘The Gospels in Muslim Discourse of the Ninth to the Fourteenth Centuries: an Exegetical Inventorial Table’, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 14, 2003.
- ‘Alī al-Ṭabarī, *Al-radd ‘alā al-Naṣārā*, ed. I.-A. Khalifé and W. Kutsch, ‘*Ar-Radd ‘alā-n-Naṣārā de ‘Alī al-Ṭabarī*’, *Mélanges de l’Université Saint Joseph* 36, 1959; trans. J.-M. Gaudeul, *Riposte aux Chrétiens par ‘Alī al-Ṭabarī*, Rome, 1995.
- Allard, M., *Le problème des attributs divins dans la doctrine d’al-Aṣ‘arī et de ses premiers grands disciples*, Beirut, 1965.
- ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-burhān*, in M. Hayek, ‘*Ammār al-Baṣrī, théologie et controverses*’, Beirut, 1977.
- al-Ash‘arī, Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, ed. H. Ritter, Istanbul, 1930.
- al-Bāqillānī, Abū Bakr, *Kitāb al-tahmīd*, ed. M.M. al-Khuḍayrī and M. ‘A.-H. Abū Rīda, *Al-tahmīd fī al-radd ‘alā al-Mulḥida wa-al-Mu‘aṭṭila wa-al-Rāfiḍa wa-al-Khawārij wa-al-Mu‘tazila*, Cairo, 1947; ed. R. McCarthy, *Kitāb al-tahmīd*, Beirut, 1957.
- al-Bayḍāwī, ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar, and Maḥmūd b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Iṣfahānī, trans. E.E. Calverley and J.W. Pollock, *Nature, God and Man in Medieval Islam*, ‘*Abd Allah Baydawi’s text Tawālī’ al-Anwar min Matalī’ al-Anzar along with Mahmud Isfahani’s commentary Matalī’ al-Anzar*, Sharh Tawālī’ al-Anwar (*Islamic Philosophy and Science, texts and studies* 45), Leiden, 2002.
- Cerić, M., *Roots of Synthetic Theology in Islām, a study of the theology of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944)*, Kuala Lumpur, 1995.
- Cheikho, L., *Vingt traits théologiques d’auteurs arabes chrétiens*, Beirut, 1920.

- Ebied, R., and D. Thomas, *Muslim-Christian-Polemic during the Crusades, the Letter from the People of Cyprus and al-Dimashqī's Response* (*The History of Christian-Muslim Relations* 2), Leiden, 2005.
- Elkaisy-Friemuth, M., *God and Humans in Islamic Thought, 'Abd al-Jabbār, Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī*, London, 2006.
- Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion*, trans. P.R. Amidon, *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis: selected passages*, Oxford, 1990.
- van Ess, J., 'Ibn Kullāb und die Miḥna', *Oriens* 18–19, 1967.
- , *Frühe Mu'tazilitische Häresiographie, zwei werke des Nāṣī' al-Akbar (gest. 293 H.) herausgegeben und eingeleitet*, Beirut, 1971.
- , *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra, eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, 6 vols, Berlin, 1991–1995.
- Frank, R.M., *Beings and their Attributes, the Teaching of the Basrian School of the Mu'tazila in the Classical Period*, Albany NY, 1978.
- Gaudeul, J.-M., 'The Correspondence between Leo and 'Umar: 'Umar's letter rediscovered?', *Islamochristiana* 10, 1984.
- al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, ed. and trans. M.E. Marmura, *Al-Ghazālī, the Incoherence of the Philosophers*, Provo UT, 2000.
- Gimaret, D., *Une lecture mu'tazilite du Coran: le Tafsīr d'Abū 'Alī al-Djubbā'ī (m. 303)*, Louvain, 1994.
- Graf, G., *Catalogue de manuscrits arabes chrétiens conservés au Caire*, (*Studi e Testi* 63), Vatican City, 1934.
- S. Griffith, 'Chapter Ten of the *Scholion*: Theodore Bar Kōnī's Apology for Christianity', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 47, 1981.
- , 'The Concept of *al-Uqnūm* in 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's Apology for the Doctrine of the Trinity', in K. Samir, ed., *Actes du premier congrès international d'études arabes chrétiennes (Goslar, septembre 1980)*, Rome, 1982.
- , '"Melkites", "Jacobites" and the Christological Controversies in Arabic in Third/Ninth Century Syria', in D. Thomas, ed., *Syrian Christians under Islam, the first thousand years*, Leiden, 2001.
- Grillmeier, A., *Le Christ dans la tradition chrétienne. De l'âge apostolique à Chalcédoine (451)*, Paris, 1973.
- Haddad, W.Z., 'A Tenth-Century Speculative Theologian's refutation of the Basic Doctrines of Christianity: al-Bāqillānī (d. A.D. 1013)', in Y.Y. Haddad and W.Z. Haddad, *Muslim-Christian Encounters*, Gainesville, 1995.
- al-Ḥasan Ibn Ayyūb, *Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, in Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, Cairo, 1905.
- Hayek, M., *'Ammār al-Baṣrī, théologie et controverses*, Beirut, 1977.
- Heemskerk, M., 'A Mu'tazilite Refutation of Christianity and Judaism: Two Fragments from 'Abd al-Jabbār's *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-'l-'adl*', in B. Roggema et al., eds, *The Three Rings, Textual Studies in the Historical Dialogue of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Leuven, 2005.
- Ibish, Y., *The Political Doctrine of al-Bāqillānī*, Beirut, 1966.
- Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad 'Alī, *K. al-faṣl fī al-milal wa-al-aḥwā' wa-al-niḥal*, Cairo, 1903.
- Ibn al-Murtaḍā, Aḥmad Ibn Yahyā, *Kitāb ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazila*, ed. S. Diwald-Wilzer, *Die Klassen der Mu'taziliten von Aḥmad Ibn Yahyā Ibn al-Murtaḍā*, Beirut, 1988.

- Ibn al-Nadīm, Abū al-Faraj, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, ed. M. Riḍā-Tajaddud, Tehran, 1971; trans. B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, 2 vols., New York, 1970.
- Ibn Taymiyya, Taqī al-Dīn, *Al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ*, Cairo, 1905.
- al-Jāḥiz, Abū 'Uthmān, *Fī al-radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, ed. J. Finkel in *Thalāth rasā'il li-Abī 'Uthmān al-Jāḥiz*, Cairo, 1926.
- John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus*, trans. F.H. Chase, *Saint John of Damascus, Writings (The Fathers of the Church 37)*, Washington DC, 1958.
- al-Ka'bī al-Balkhī, Abū al-Qāsim, *Awā'il al-adilla fī uṣūl al-dīn*, fragments quoted by 'Isā b. Ishāq Ibn Zur'a, published in P. Sbath, *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologetiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens*, Cairo, 1929.
- van Koningsveld, P., 'The Islamic Image of Paul and the Origin of the Gospel of Barnabas', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 20, 1996.
- Kraemer, J., *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam, the Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age*, Leiden, 1986.
- , *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam, Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī and his Circle*, Leiden, 1986.
- Landberg, C., *Primeurs arabes*, Leiden, 1889.
- McCarthy, R., *The Theology of al-Ash'arī*, Beirut, 1953.
- McDermott, M., 'Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq on the Dahriyyah', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 50, 1984.
- Madelung, W., 'Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq über die Bardesaniten, Marcioniten und Kantäer', in H.R. Roemer and A. Noth, eds, *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Vorderen Orients: Festschrift für Bertold Spuler zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*, Leiden, 1981 (repr. in W. Madelung, *Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam*, London, 1985).
- al-Mas'ūdī, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. and French trans. C. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, Paris, 1861–1877.
- al-Māturīdī, Abū Maṣṣūr, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd, Abū Maṣṣūr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Māturīdī al-Samarqandī*, ed. F. Kholeif, Beirut, 1970; ed. B. Topaloğlu and M. Aruçi, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, Ankara, 2003.
- Mingana, A., 'The Apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph Mahdī', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 12, 1928.
- Monnot, G., 'Les écrits musulmans sur les religions non-bibliques', *MIDEO* 13, 1977; repr. in Monnot, *Islam et Religions*.
- , 'Les doctrines des Chrétiens dans le *Moghni* de 'Abd al-Jabbār', *MIDEO* 16, 1983; repr. in Monnot, *Islam et Religions*.
- Monnot, G., *Islam et Religions*, Paris, 1986.
- al-Nāshī' al-Akbar, *K. al-awsat fī al-maqālāt*, ed. J. van Ess, *Frühe Mu'tazilitische Häresiographie, zwei werke des Nāshī' al-Akbar (gest. 293 H.) herausgegeben und eingeleitet*, Beirut, 1971.
- Pellat, C., 'Nouvel essai d'inventaire de l'oeuvre Ḡāhizienne', *Arabica* 31, 1984.
- Périer, A., 'Un traité de Yahyā ben 'Adī', *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 22, 1920–1921.
- Pessagno, J., 'The Reconstruction of the Thought of Muḥammad ibn Shabīb', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104, 1984.
- Peters, J.R.T.M., *God's Created Speech, a study in the speculative theology of the Mu'tazilī Qāḍī l-Qudāt Abū l-Ḥasan 'Abd al-Jabbār bn Aḥmad al-Hamaḍānī*, Leiden, 1976.

- Pines, S., "Israel, my Firstborn" and the Sonship of Jesus', in E.E. Urbach, R.J. Zwi Werblowsky and C. Wirzubski, eds, *Studies in Mysticism and Religion presented to Gershom G. Scholem*, Jerusalem, 1967.
- Prestige, G.L., *God in Patristic Thought*, second ed., London, 1952.
- al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, 'Al-radd 'alā al-Naṣārā', ed. I. di Matteo, 'Confutazione contro i Cristiani dello zaydita al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm', *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 9, 1921–1922.
- Reynolds, G.S., *A Muslim Theologian in the Sectarian Milieu*, 'Abd al-Jabbār and the Critique of Christian Origins, Leiden, 2004.
- , 'A New Source for Church History? Eastern Christianity in 'Abd al-Jabbār's (415/1025) Confirmation', *Oriens Christianus* 86, 2002.
- , 'A Medieval Islamic Polemic against certain Practices and Doctrines of the East Syrian Church: Introduction, Excerpts and Commentary', in D. Thomas, ed., *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule*, Leiden, 2003.
- Reynolds, G.S., and S.K. Samir, *The Critique of Christian Origins: Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār's (d. 415/1025) Islamic Essay on Christianity in his Tathbīt dalā'il al-nubuwwa (Confirmation of the Proofs of Prophecy)*, Provo UT, forthcoming.
- Riedel, W., *Der Katalog der christlichen Schriften in arabischer Sprache von Abu 'l-Barakat*, Nachrichten der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften Göttingen, Phil-Hist. Klasse, 1902.
- Robinson, N., *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, Albany NY, 1991.
- Rudolph, U., *Al-Māturīdī & die sunnitische Theologie in Samarkand*, Leiden, 1997.
- Sahas, D.J., *John of Damascus on Islam, the "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"*, Leiden, 1972.
- Samir, K., *Al-Ṣaḡfī Ibn al-'Assāl, brefs chapitres sur la Trinité et l'Incarnation (Patrologia Orientalis 42)*, Turnhout, 1985.
- , 'Une allusion au Filioque dans la "Réfutation des chrétiens" de 'Abd al-Gabbār (m. 1025)', in *Studi albanologici, balcanici, bizantini e orientali in onore di Giuseppe Valentini*, sj, Florence, 1986.
- Sbath, P., *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologétiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens du IXe au XIVe siècle*, Cairo, 1929.
- Simaika Pasha, M., *Catalogue of the Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in the Coptic Museum, the Patriarchate, the Principal Churches of Cairo and Alexandria and the Monasteries of Egypt*, Cairo, 1942.
- Stern, S.M., 'Quotations from Apocryphal Gospels in 'Abd al-Jabbār', *Journal of Theological Studies* new series 18, 1967.
- , 'Abd al-Jabbār's Account of how Christ's Religion was falsified by the Adoption of Roman Customs', *Journal of Theological Studies* new series 19, 1968.
- al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ja'far, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje et al., Leiden, 1879–1901.
- Theodore Abū Qurra, *Mayāmīr*, ed. C. Bacha, *Les oeuvres arabes de Théodore Aboucarra Evêque d'Haran*, Beirut, 1904; trans. J. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, Provo UT, 2005.
- Theodore bar Kōnī, *Livre des scholies (recension de Séert) (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 431–432)*; trans. R. Hespel and R. Draguet, 2 vols, Louvain, 1981–1982.



- Thomas, D., *Anti-Christian Polemic in Early Islam, Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq's 'Against the Trinity'*, Cambridge, 1992.
- , 'The Miracles of Jesus in early Islamic Polemic', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 39, 1994.
- , 'Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq and the History of Religions', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 41, 1996.
- , 'Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī on the Divinity of Jesus Christ', *Islamochristiana* 23, 1997.
- , 'The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Early 'Abbasid Era', in L. Ridgeon, ed., *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity*, London, 2001.
- , *Early Muslim Polemic against Christianity, Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq's 'Against the Incarnation'*, Cambridge, 2002.
- , ed., *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule, Church Life and Scholarship in 'Abbasid Iraq (The History of Christian-Muslim Relations 1)*, Leiden, 2003.
- , 'Early Muslim Responses to Christianity' in D. Thomas, ed., *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule*, Leiden, 2004.
- , 'Dialogue with other Faiths as an Aspect of Islamic Theology', in T.L. Hettema and A. van der Kooij, eds, *Religious Polemics in Context*, Assen, The Netherlands, 2004.
- , 'A Mu'tazilī Response to Christianity: Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī's Attack on the Trinity and Incarnation', in R. Ebied and H. Teule, eds, *Studies on the Christian Arabic Heritage in Honour of Father Prof. Dr. Samir Khalil Samir S.I. (Eastern Christian Studies 5)*, Leuven, 2004.
- , 'Christian Theologians and New Questions', in E. Grypeou, M. Swanson and D. Thomas, eds, *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with early Islam (The History of Christian-Muslim Relations 5)*, Leiden, 2006.
- Uthmān, 'A.-K., *Qāḍī al-quḍāt 'Abd al-Jabbār*, Beirut, 1967.



## REFERENCES TO THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'ĀN

|                  |             |             |                        |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Exodus 4.3       | 105         | 15.34       | 195                    |
| 4.22             | 61, 295     |             |                        |
| 7.1              | 199         | Luke 3.22   | 109                    |
| Joshua 3.7–17    | 105         | 4.24        | 197                    |
| 1 Kings 17.21–24 | 105         | 4.44        | 197                    |
| 2 Kings 1.9–12   | 105         | 7.22        | 105                    |
| 2.7–12           | 105         | 10.21       | 195                    |
| 2.8              | 105         | 22.42       | 103                    |
| 2.14             | 105         | John 2.1–11 | 105                    |
| 4.1–7            | 105         | 8.58        | 136, 201               |
| 4.34–37          | 105         | 10.30       | 199                    |
| Psalms 2.7       | 295         | 11.1–44     | 103                    |
| Proverbs 8.22–30 | 201         | 11.41–42    | 195                    |
| Isaiah 7.14      | 197, 295    | 14.9        | 199                    |
| Ezekiel 37.1–10  | 103         | 15.14       | 295                    |
| Matthew 1.23     | 197         | 17.4        | 195                    |
| 6.9              | 293         | 20.17       | 29, 61, 293, 297       |
| 8.1–4            | 105         | 20.21       | 197                    |
| 11.5             | 105         | Q 2.34      | 375                    |
| 13.57            | 197         | Q 2.87      | 299                    |
| 14.13–21         | 105         | Q 2.124     | 289                    |
| 14.25            | 105         | Q 2.243     | 103                    |
| 15.32–39         | 105         | Q 2.255     | 317                    |
| 26.39            | 103         | Q 3.42–51   | 377                    |
| 27.46            | 195         | Q 3.45      | 29                     |
| 28.19            | 29, 59, 197 | Q 3.46      | 375                    |
| Mark 1.11        | 109         | Q 3.59      | 199, 291               |
| 1.32–34          | 105         | Q 3.181     | 377                    |
| 6.4              | 197         | Q 4.125     | 84, 111, 219, 285, 299 |
| 6.48–49          | 105         | Q 4.143–144 | 103                    |
| 14.36            | 103         | Q 4.157     | 361                    |
|                  |             | Q 4.163     | 377                    |
|                  |             | Q 4.164     | 287                    |
|                  |             | Q 4.171     | 29, 61, 291            |

|            |          |              |          |
|------------|----------|--------------|----------|
| Q 5.18     | 295      | Q 21.17      | 113      |
| Q 5.101    | 295      | Q 21.22      | 134, 351 |
| Q 5.110    | 105, 375 | Q 21.68      | 289      |
| Q 5.116    | 353, 377 | Q 21.71      | 289      |
| Q 5.64     | 377      |              |          |
|            |          | Q 22.12      | 301      |
| Q 7.11     | 375      |              |          |
| Q 7.54     | 173, 179 | Q 26.193-195 | 299      |
| Q 7.73     | 289      |              |          |
| Q 7.107    | 105      | Q 28.31      | 105      |
| Q 7.117    | 105      |              |          |
|            |          | Q 29.26      | 289      |
| Q 9.30     | 377      |              |          |
|            |          | Q 33.7       | 377      |
| Q 14.37    | 289      |              |          |
|            |          | Q 37.97      | 289      |
| Q 15.29    | 301      | Q 37.102-107 | 289      |
|            |          |              |          |
| Q 16.2     | 301      | Q 38.72      | 301      |
| Q 16.57    | 295      |              |          |
| Q 16.102   | 299      | Q 39.75      | 173      |
|            |          |              |          |
| Q 19.17-21 | 377      | Q 42.52      | 301      |
| Q 19.29-33 | 375      |              |          |
| Q 19.47    | 289      | Q 45.24      | 149      |
| Q 19.56    | 377      |              |          |
|            |          | Q 52.39      | 295      |
| Q 20.69    | 105      |              |          |
|            |          | Q 57.4       | 317      |

## INDEX

- Aaron 199  
 ‘Abd al-Jabbār 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 39,  
   59, 61, 73, 75, 131, 135, 153, 205–  
   224, 241  
 Abel, son of Adam 365  
 Abel, A. 125, 127  
 Abraham, prophet and friend of  
   God 84, 90, 99, 111, 136, 193, 199,  
   201, 211, 219, 239, 285, 287, 289,  
   301  
 Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Baṣrī 205, 218, 219  
 Abū Bakr, caliph 285, 291  
 Abū al-Barakāt Ibn Kabar 24  
 Abū Faḍl ʿIyāḍ, qāḍī 121  
 Abū al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf 5, 20, 21,  
   33, 283, 323, 337  
 Abū ʿIsā al-Warrāq 7, 9, 13, 21–22,  
   24, 25, 26, 37, 39, 41, 43, 49, 51,  
   53, 55, 57, 59, 63, 65, 82, 97, 129,  
   130, 132, 133, 134, 135, 137–138,  
   139, 159, 161, 167, 171, 173, 181,  
   183, 189, 191, 206, 208, 213, 214,  
   220–221, 229, 231, 233, 235, 237,  
   269, 273, 275, 277, 303, 305, 307,  
   331, 353, 365, 367  
 Abū Maʿshar Jaʿfar al-Balkhī 20  
 Abū Rāʾiṭa, Ḥabīb ibn Khidma 17  
 Accidents, qualifiers of material  
   substances 67–71, 75, 128, 133,  
   140, 145–153, 157, 179, 181, 210,  
   267–269, 311, 321–323, 325–327,  
   329–333, 341, 345, 347, 357  
 Acts of the Apostles 41  
 Adam 45, 47, 55, 124, 136, 191, 199,  
   291, 293, 299, 301, 365, 375  
 Adamites 26, 45  
 Adoptionist Christology 84, 89, 99,  
   111–113, 199, 211, 219, 239, 283–  
   301  
   *see also* Incarnation  
 Agent of the act of Uniting 85, 99,  
   183–185, 215, 303, 351, 353  
   *see also* Trinity  
 ‘Aḍud al-Dawla, Būyid amīr 119,  
   120, 121  
 ‘Alī al-Ṭabarī 59, 87  
 Allard, M. 119, 122, 124–125  
 ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī 3–5, 15, 17, 26, 33,  
   39, 73, 75, 131, 138, 155, 223, 283  
 Angelics, Christian sect 26, 43  
 Anthropomorphists 122, 275, 371  
 Apollinarians, 27, 28, 57, 73  
 Apostles, *see* Disciples of Jesus  
 Apostolics, Christian sect 26, 43  
 Argument from design 33, 73, 147  
 Arians 23, 27, 28, 32, 59, 73  
 Aristotle 20, 69, 75, 145, 273  
 Arius 59, 239  
 Armenia 55  
 Ascension of Christ 41, 88, 105, 113,  
   193  
 al-Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan 10–12, 15,  
   20, 24, 119, 130, 131, 165, 206, 323  
 Atoning death of Christ 7, 8, 26,  
   124, 181, 189, 216, 218, 235, 237  
   *see also* crucifixion of Christ  
 Attributes of God 8, 11, 15, 33, 122,  
   125, 130–131, 165–167, 223, 239–  
   241, 243, 245, 247, 267, 311, 349,  
   355  
 Attributes, hypostases as 3–5, 15,  
   25, 31, 33, 39, 71, 73–75, 128–129,  
   130–131, 132, 153–157, 165–167,  
   169, 210, 223, 227, 231, 251, 255–  
   257, 261, 265, 269–271, 283, 357,  
   365  
   *see also* Trinity  
 Baghdad 6, 18, 19, 25, 80, 119, 121,  
   205, 220, 221, 227, 241

- al-Bāhili, Abū 'Umar 79  
 al-Balkhī, Abū al-Qāsim al-Ka'bī 24,  
     79–80, 91, 115, 241  
 al-Bāqillānī, Abū Bakr 10, 14, 15, 16,  
     18, 59, 69, 75, 79, 85, 87–89, 97,  
     103, 111, 119–141, 205, 210, 213,  
     214, 217, 220, 223, 253, 269, 311,  
     331, 365  
 Barāhima 122, 124  
 Bible 3, 26, 30, 47, 49, 59, 61, 89,  
     105, 109, 207  
 Bible, Christian arguments from  
     59–61, 197, 215, 357–359  
 Byzantines 161, 173, 179, 181  
     *see also* Melkites
- Cathars 27, 28, 45  
 Christ as title 41, 115, 197, 227, 231,  
     321, 339, 373  
 Christian interlocutors 67–69, 165–  
     167, 213–214, 221–223, 295–299,  
     317–319, 323–327, 341  
 Collyridians 355  
 Crucifixion of Christ 30, 41, 49, 51,  
     53, 55, 63, 65, 87, 105, 113, 135,  
     136, 138, 187, 191–193, 195, 201,  
     209, 214, 215, 216, 231, 237, 239,  
     305, 307, 347, 349, 361, 369, 371,  
     373  
     *see also* atoning death of Christ  
 Cyril of Alexandria 51
- Dahriyya 21, 82, 149  
 David, prophet 201, 293  
 Dayṣanites 21, 82  
 Dhimmīs 2, 3, 8  
 Disciples of Jesus 41, 43, 45, 103,  
     109, 195, 293, 295, 359  
 Dualists 6, 20, 21, 22, 23, 51, 82, 121,  
     124, 127, 206, 208, 217, 267
- Elijah, prophet 87, 88, 105  
 Elisha, prophet 87, 88, 105  
 Epiphanius of Salamis 27, 43, 45, 47,  
     49, 55, 57, 59, 355  
 Eutychius 27, 28, 57  
 Evangelists 357–361
- Eve 45, 117, 199, 365  
 Ezekiel, prophet 88, 103  
 Ezra, scribe 377
- Fakhr al-Dawla, Būyid amīr 205–  
     206  
 al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr 67  
 Father, God the 5, 15, 25, 29, 31,  
     37, 39, 53, 57, 59, 61, 67, 73, 85,  
     86, 97, 99, 101, 128, 132, 136,  
     153, 163, 169, 171, 183, 185–187,  
     195, 197, 199–201, 210, 211, 219,  
     227, 229, 239, 241–243, 245,  
     251, 255, 259, 261–265, 267,  
     269, 273–275, 277, 283, 285,  
     293–295, 297, 303, 305, 307,  
     357  
     *see also* Trinity  
*Filioque* 229  
     *see also* Trinity
- Fire and its heat, analogy of the  
     Trinity 210, 229, 275, 277  
 Fire in iron, analogy of the Trinity  
     39, 41  
 Fire from stone, analogy of the  
     Trinity 101
- Gabriel, angel 299, 301  
 Gospel 29, 41, 43, 59–61, 103, 109,  
     135, 136, 137, 195, 197, 199, 211,  
     293, 295, 297–299, 357–361, 363  
 Gospel, corruption of 359  
 Gregorians 55  
     *see also* Julianists
- Ḥamza ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib 291  
 Harim ibn Sinān 287  
 al-Ḥasan ibn Ayyūb 59, 87–88, 103,  
     139, 193, 195  
 heaven 41, 47, 57, 105, 113, 133, 173,  
     179, 193, 293  
     *see also* metaphors of the Incarna-  
         tion
- Hieracites 27, 28, 47  
 Holy Spirit as Life of God 4, 5, 25,  
     33, 39, 73–75, 128, 129, 153–155,  
     157, 227, 229, 233, 243, 245, 253,

- 255, 257, 259, 261, 269–271, 283, 363  
*see also* Trinity
- hypostases, divine 14–15, 29, 31–32, 33, 37, 49, 51, 57, 59, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 83, 85, 128, 129–132, 137, 138, 153–171, 177, 183–185, 187, 209–210, 223, 229–233, 239–283, 301, 303, 305, 307, 339, 349, 353, 355–357, 363, 365–367, 369  
*see also* Trinity
- hypostases in Christ 30, 41, 49, 51, 53, 65, 97, 134, 173, 181, 183, 233, 237, 345, 351, 367, 373  
*see also* Incarnation
- Ibīsh, Y. 120
- Ibn ‘Abbād, vizier 205–206, 208
- Ibn al-‘Assāl, Abū al-Faḍāl al-Ṣafī 17, 19–20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 34, 59
- Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad 20, 23, 25
- Ibn al-Ikshīd 273
- Ibn Kullāb, ‘Abdallāh 130, 131, 153, 157, 241, 245  
*see also* Kullābiyya
- Ibn al-Nadīm 23, 28, 245
- Ibn al-Rāwandī 10, 82
- Ibn Shabīb, Abū Bakr Muḥammad 9, 84, 89, 92, 99
- Ibn Zur‘a, ‘Isā ibn Ishāq 91, 115, 241
- Ibrāhīm al-‘Ayyāsh 205, 219
- Idrīs, prophet 377
- Incarnation 7, 8, 14, 16, 17, 23, 26, 30, 34, 84, 85, 99, 124, 126, 133, 134, 208, 209, 216, 217, 218, 220, 222, 233, 235, 283, 303, 309, 367  
*see also* adoptionist Christology; hypostases in Christ; metaphors of the Incarnation; Uniting of two natures in Christ; Uniting of the two volitions in Christ
- Individuals, hypostases as 75, 131, 134, 138, 169, 231, 279  
*see also* Trinity
- al-Īrānshahrī, Abū al-‘Abbās 20, 206
- iron, *see* fire in iron
- Isaac of Nineveh 53
- Isaacites 27, 28, 53
- al-Iskāfī, Abū Ja‘far 220, 241, 273
- Israel, ‘first-born’ 61, 295
- Jacob, patriarch 295
- Jacob Baradaeus 229, 363
- Jacobites 7, 17, 20, 27, 28, 30, 51, 53, 55, 57, 83, 87, 97, 99, 107, 127, 129, 133, 138, 159, 163, 171, 173, 177, 179, 181, 189, 214, 227, 229, 231, 233, 235, 237, 261, 305, 345, 349, 357, 367, 369
- al-Jāhīz, Abū ‘Uthmān 2, 61, 84, 89, 90, 92, 99, 111, 199, 211, 219, 239, 285, 287, 289, 291, 293, 295, 297, 301, 353, 359, 373, 375, 377
- Jahm ibn Ṣafwān 47
- al-Jayḥānī, Abū ‘Abdallāh 23, 25
- Jews 10, 20, 21, 22, 103, 105, 122, 123, 124, 217, 295, 361, 377
- al-Jishumī, Abū al-Sa’d 206
- John of Damascus 2, 3, 26, 27, 39, 43, 45, 47, 49, 55, 57, 59, 125, 126
- John, evangelist 359
- Joseph, patriarch 87, 88, 295
- Joshua son of Nun 87, 88, 105
- al-Jubbā’ī, Abū ‘Alī 13–14, 16, 19, 26, 33, 39, 73, 75, 79, 132, 138–139, 155, 206, 209, 210, 213–214, 215, 218–219, 222, 223, 227, 239, 251, 255, 257, 259, 261, 283, 285, 299, 323, 325, 333, 337, 341, 353, 355, 361
- al-Jubbā’ī, Abū Hāshim 205, 206, 218
- Judaism 6, 22, 283
- Julian of Halicarnassus 55, 237, 349
- Julianists 27, 28, 55, 229, 237, 349, 367, 373
- Ka’ba 289
- Kalām 3, 14–18, 31, 39, 69, 79, 128, 132, 140, 145, 151, 157, 205, 210,

- 212, 213, 214, 222, 249, 279, 335,  
343  
Khālīd ibn Walīd 291  
al-Kindī, Abū Yūsuf 21, 37, 75  
Kullābiyya 241, 243, 245, 247, 255,  
257, 261, 265, 357
- Light from light, Trinity as 53, 85,  
101
- Location of the divine nature in  
Christ 39, 173, 175, 187, 191, 233,  
317–321  
*see also* metaphors of the Incarna-  
tion
- Luke, evangelist 359
- Majūs 20, 22
- Malkān, fictitious founder of the  
Melkites 363
- Manichaeans 20, 21, 82
- Marcionites 20, 21, 82
- Mark, evangelist 359
- Maronites 27, 28, 55, 229, 237, 367
- Mary, Virgin 39, 51, 53, 55, 57, 61,  
134, 185, 187, 189–191, 199, 227,  
233, 237, 239, 291, 353, 355, 369,  
373, 377
- Matthew, evangelist 136, 359
- al-Māturīdī, Abū Maṣṣūr 10, 12, 14,  
17, 53, 79–93, 97, 99, 109, 119,  
121, 126, 139, 193, 195, 199, 205,  
217, 219, 283, 311
- Mazdakians 21
- Melkites 7, 17, 23, 27, 28, 30, 49, 51,  
53, 83, 87, 91, 97, 107, 127, 129,  
130, 133–134, 136, 137, 138, 161,  
163, 173, 181, 187, 189, 191, 210,  
215, 221, 227, 229, 231, 233, 235,  
237, 261, 263, 271, 357, 363, 367  
*see also* Byzantines
- Mecca 289
- Mesallians 27, 47
- Metaphors of the Incarnation 39,  
55, 133–134, 138, 171–183, 213–  
214, 233–235, 239, 305, 317–345,  
357  
*see also* heaven; Incarnation;  
location of the divine nature  
in Christ; mirror; mixing and  
mingling; seal
- Miracles of Jesus 87–89, 101–107,  
135, 193–197, 213, 319–321, 343,  
361
- Mirror, Incarnation as appearance  
in 133, 173, 175, 214, 235, 327–  
331  
*see also* metaphors of the Incarna-  
tion
- Mixing and mingling, Incarnation  
as 39, 57, 63, 133, 171, 173, 177,  
179–181, 185, 213, 221, 222, 233,  
305, 317–321, 357  
*see also* metaphors of the Incarna-  
tion
- Moses, prophet 86, 87–88, 92, 101,  
103, 124, 135, 136, 193, 195, 197,  
287
- Moses' staff 86, 103–105, 139, 193–  
195
- Mu'ammār ibn 'Abbād 337
- Mu'ayyid al-Dawla, Būyid amīr 205
- Muḥammad, Prophet 3, 29, 61, 81,  
82, 86, 87, 88, 92, 99, 105, 111,  
113, 121, 122, 123, 207, 355
- Muḥarrām, month of God 291
- Mujassima 122  
*see also* anthropomorphists
- Murji'a 9, 20
- Mu'tazila 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 15, 16, 18, 19,  
20, 21, 33, 43, 79, 80, 84, 119, 120,  
122, 125, 131, 179, 205, 206, 207,  
208, 211, 215, 217, 218, 219, 220,  
221, 241
- al-Nāshī' al-Akbar 13, 14, 17, 18, 19–  
34, 37, 59, 73, 79, 83, 84, 127, 138,  
145, 147, 153, 171, 208, 227, 239,  
253, 269, 307, 351, 367
- al-Nawbakhtī, Abū Muḥammad  
al-Ḥasan 20, 206
- al-Nazzām, Ibrāhīm 9, 20, 84–85,  
89, 90, 92, 99, 111, 219
- Nestorians 3, 7, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30,  
39, 41, 43, 45, 49, 53, 57, 65, 83,



- 87, 97, 107, 129, 133, 138, 159, 163,  
173, 179, 181, 189, 214, 222, 227,  
229, 231, 233, 235, 237, 357, 367,  
369, 373
- Nestorius 45, 51, 229, 363
- Nicolaitans 26, 28, 45
- Nicholas of Antioch, deacon 45
- Noah 191, 377
- Ophites 27, 28, 47
- Paradise 45, 57
- Particular properties, hypostases as  
132, 138, 169, 231, 271, 281, 365
- Paul, apostle 41, 43, 363
- Peters, J.T.R.M. 217
- Pethion, Christian theologian 245
- Philosophers 10, 19, 20, 21, 65, 67,  
75, 149, 181
- Power as divine hypostasis 75, 128–  
129, 153–155, 227, 231, 253, 259,  
357  
*see also* Trinity
- Psalms 295
- Qadariyya 45, 122
- al-Qaḥṭabī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad  
27–28, 53
- al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm 7, 9, 13, 25,  
26, 91
- Qūlūrusites 27, 30, 49, 51, 55
- Qurʾān 3, 4, 6, 7, 14, 16, 29, 79, 83,  
84, 91, 92, 113, 120, 122, 123, 133,  
134, 136, 211, 215, 216, 287, 291,  
297, 299, 355, 359, 361, 37
- Qurʾān as word of God 11, 122, 213,  
222, 301, 323, 337, 341
- Redeemed, Christian sect 27, 51, 55
- Resurrection of bodies 41, 45
- Reynolds, G.S. 206
- Rudolph, U. 80–81, 82
- Šālih, prophet 289
- Seal, Incarnation as the imprint of  
133, 173, 175, 214, 235, 327, 329–  
331
- see also* metaphors of the Incarna-  
tion
- al-Shahrastānī, Abū al-Faṭḥ 20, 21
- Solomon 201
- Son as Knowledge of God 4, 25, 33,  
39, 73, 75, 128–129, 153, 155, 157,  
161, 203, 227, 231, 233, 243, 245,  
253, 255, 259, 261, 267, 283, 335,  
363  
*see also* Trinity
- Son as Word of God 4, 39, 49, 51,  
53, 75, 97, 133, 134, 138, 171, 173,  
175, 177, 179, 181, 183, 185, 187,  
189, 193, 199, 227, 229, 231, 233,  
235, 237, 239, 243, 245, 253, 267,  
269, 297–301, 303, 305, 315, 323,  
335, 351, 353  
*see also* Trinity
- Spiritualists, Christian sect 27, 28,  
45, 65
- Substance as a category of being 33,  
55, 77, 128, 140, 145–153, 271, 273,  
277
- Substance, divine 15, 29, 32, 33, 37,  
51, 53, 57, 59, 67, 73, 75, 127–128,  
129–131, 132, 134, 137, 140, 145–  
153, 157, 159–171, 183–185, 187,  
209–210, 227, 229, 231–233, 245,  
247, 249, 251, 255, 261–269, 271,  
273, 279, 303, 339, 345, 349, 351,  
353, 355, 363, 367  
*see also* Trinity
- Substance in Jesus Christ 30, 39, 41,  
49, 53, 65, 136, 181–183, 191, 214,  
233, 235, 237, 281, 305, 307, 333,  
345, 347, 367, 371, 373
- Substance, material 14, 69, 71, 77,  
107, 113, 128, 140, 145–153, 173,  
179–181, 210, 239, 269, 277, 281,  
317, 319, 321, 323, 327, 329, 331,  
333, 345
- Sun and its radiance, analogy of the  
Trinity 210, 230, 275–277, 279  
*see also* Trinity
- Theodore Abū Qurra 17, 91, 115,  
133, 173, 215, 221, 275, 363

- Theodore bar Kōnī 27, 43, 45, 47,  
49, 51, 55, 57, 59  
Timothy I 26, 39, 103  
Torah 41, 43, 61, 295, 297  
Trinity 3, 4, 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 23, 25,  
26, 31–32, 34, 37–39, 55, 59–61,  
65–77, 82, 85, 97, 124, 126, 127–  
133, 136, 137–138, 159, 161, 169,  
177, 208, 209–212, 215, 216, 217,  
218, 219–220, 227, 239, 279, 283,  
301, 329, 355, 363  
*see also* agent of the Incarnation;  
attributes, hypostases as;  
*filioque*; fire and its heat; fire  
in iron; fire from stone; God  
the Father; Holy Spirit as Life  
of God; hypostases, divine;  
individuals, hypostases as;  
light from light, Trinity as;  
particular properties; power  
as divine hypostasis; Son as  
Knowledge of God; Son as  
Word of God; substance; sun  
and its radiance
- ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Ḥassān 373  
Uniting of two natures in Christ 7,  
39, 49, 63, 84, 134, 135, 136–137,  
138, 159, 171–203, 209, 212–215,  
216, 221, 229, 233, 235, 237, 281,  
303–377  
*see also* Incarnation  
Uniting of the two volitions in  
Christ 39, 53, 212–213, 235, 303,  
307–317  
*see also* Incarnation
- Valentinians 27, 28, 55, 57  
Valesians 27, 49, 51
- Worship of Christ 209, 215–216, 237,  
295, 305, 307, 321, 339, 353, 367–  
375
- Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī 20, 25, 34, 127  
al-Yamānī, Christian teacher 27, 28,  
53
- Zanj 149  
Zoroastrianism 6, 10, 20, 21, 22, 82,  
124, 127  
*see also* Majūs  
Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā 287  
Zurqān, Abū Yaʿlā Muḥammad al-  
Mismaʿī 20, 24